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The Rivals

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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the possession of Mr. Horace Noble Pym of Brasted, England

The Riverside Literature Series

THE RIVALS

A COMEDY

BY

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES

BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

For the facts of Sheridan's life I am indebted to the biographies by W. Fraser Rae (*Sheridan, a Biography*, 2 vols., 1896) and Mr. Walter Sichel (*Sheridan, From New and Original Material*, 2 vols., 1909). For the text I have reprinted a copy of the first edition in my own possession. This reprint, I believe, will have some value as the first accurate reproduction of the edition that Sheridan himself prepared for the press. Since no manuscript of *The Rivals* exists, this edition is the only authentic version of the play. The notes are original except where explicit credit is given. For the frequent quotations from contemporary newspapers I am indebted to Rae's *Sheridan's Plays, now first printed as he wrote them* (1902). The best annotated edition of Sheridan is Professor Nettleton's *The Major Dramas of Sheridan* (*The Athenæum Press Series*, 1906). I purposely refrained from consulting this edition until my own was ready for the press; I was then able to add from Professor Nettleton's work several notes, for which proper acknowledgment is made. I desire to express my gratitude to my colleagues, Professors James Morgan Hart, Clark S. Northup, and Lane Cooper, for having read in manuscript the *Introduction*.

J. Q. Adams, Jr.

Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.,
January, 1910.

INTRODUCTION

I

SHERIDAN'S CAREER

In Sheridan's progenitors we find in ample measure those qualities of mind which made him illustrious in two separate careers — as playwright and as parliamentarian. His grandfather was the Reverend Thomas Sheridan, D. D., of Dublin, well known to contemporaries for his learning and wit, and still remembered as the intimate friend of Dean Swift. The latter found the doctor's companionship so pleasant that for some years he reserved for him at the Deanery a room hospitably named "Sheridan." His esteem for the doctor may be summed up by quoting the first line of one of his Latin verses: —

His grandfather.

Deliciæ Sheridan musarum, dulcis amice!

The playwright's father, Thomas Sheridan, was likewise a man of great mental vigor, and of such activity as kept him much in the public eye. For several years he was conspicuous as the reform manager of the Theatre Royal in Dublin; later, as an actor, he shared with Garrick the applause of London playgoers; and, finally, he distinguished himself as a fashionable teacher of oratory, and a reformer of pronunciation. For a time his instruction was the rage among persons of rank and fortune. Mr. Sichel observes that "for one of his courses in 1762, no less than sixteen hundred subscribed at a guinea apiece, and bought his publications at 'half-a-guinea in boards.'" [1] Both Oxford and Cambridge conferred upon him honorary degrees; the authorities of Edinburgh, upon his visit there, voted him the freedom of the city; and the King, to further his plans of a great pronouncing dictionary, granted him a pension of £200 a year. But his schemes of reforming the spoken language were Quixotic. Doctor Samuel Johnson,

His father.

[1] Walter Sichel, *Sheridan*, i. 244.

who had once been his friend, openly ridiculed his teaching of oratory, and sneered at his proposed dictionary.

To his mother, however, more than to his father, Sheridan was indebted for his qualities of mind. She was the daughter of a Dublin rector, the Reverend Philip Chamberlaine, D. D., a man with a strong personality and a keen sense of humor. Although her father forbade that she be taught the art of writing, at the age of fifteen she became the author of a romance, which, after her death, was published and adapted to the stage. When in 1746 the Kelly rioters wrecked the Theatre Royal in Dublin, she published in prose and verse warm praises of the conduct of Mr. Sheridan, the manager. With these Mr. Sheridan was so much pleased that he at once sought the acquaintance of his young defender, and later persuaded her to become his wife. She was not only skillful with her pen, but also beautiful in person and charming in manner, much admired by Doctor Johnson and by the great novelist Samuel Richardson. The latter, indeed, encouraged her to attempt a novel, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph.* This was published in 1761 under Richardson's patronage, and dedicated to him in affectionate terms. At once it "took the town," and within three months passed into a second edition. It was highly praised by Doctor Johnson; was enthusiastically pronounced by Charles Fox the best novel of the age; and was circulated on the Continent, translated into French, and put with success upon the stage in Paris. Stimulated by this triumph, Mrs. Sheridan composed the following year (1762) a comedy, *The Discovery*, which Garrick accepted and produced with great applause at the Drury Lane Theatre. A second comedy, *The Dupe*, proved less fortunate, for it was much inferior in quality, and upon its presentation utterly failed. A third comedy, *A Journey to Bath*, though in parts clever, was refused by Garrick, and never came to the stage. Other literary labors were cut short by her untimely death in 1766 at the age of forty-two.

His mother

Of such parents Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in Dublin in the fall of 1751.[1] He received his early educa-

1 "The precise day, and, indeed, month of Sheridan's birth is unascertained." — Sichel. *Sheridan*, i, 253.

tion from his father, and from a private school taught by a near relative. At the age of eight, however, he went to live in England, whither his parents, driven by pecuniary distress, had preceded him. At eleven he was sent to the fashionable school of Harrow, where he lived seven years, a clever boy, but a poor student. During his residence here he lost his mother, of whom, unfortunately, he had seen very little. At the age of seventeen he left Harrow; and his father being unable to send him to the university, he came to London, and spent the next two years under the paternal roof, studying oratory with his father, and Latin and fencing with private instructors.

Birth and early training.

Two years later the family moved to Bath, the fashionable health-resort and watering-place, then far more famous than now as a city of pleasure. It was crowded with people of wealth and fashion, and haunted by adventurers and sharpers.

At Bath.

> Of all the gay places the world can afford,
> By gentle and simple for pastime ador'd,
> Fine balls, and fine concerts, fine buildings, and springs,
> Fine walks, and fine views, and a thousand fine things,
> (Not to mention the sweet situation and air)
> What place, my dear mother, with Bath can compare?[1]

Indeed, as a capital of fashion, health, and pleasure, eighteenth-century Bath was without a rival. In the midst of its varied life the young Sheridan moved, observing many queer types of humanity, noting in their talk and manners much that was ludicrous, and with his keen eye and retentive memory storing up material for future plays.

As he approached his majority he began to think of a life calling. All his inclination was towards authorship. At Harrow he had begun a play founded on *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and had composed a long essay on versification. With Halhed, an old Harrow school chum who had proceeded to Oxford, he now began to collaborate on a farce, *Jupiter* (completed, but never acted), and on a translation from the Greek of the love epistles of Aristænetus (completed and published, but without pecu-

Literary projects.

[1] *The New Bath Guide*, 1766.

niary returns). Moreover he came near launching a weekly periodical in the style of *The Spectator*. He had fixed upon a name, *Hernan's Miscellany*, had prepared some manuscript for the first issue, and had secured a willing printer; but suddenly, for reasons now unknown, he gave up the plan. His head teemed with many other literary projects.

Yet the young would-be author found time for a romantic courtship and marriage. The Sheridans became intimate at Bath with the family of Mr. Thomas Linley, a fashionable teacher of music, noted both as a player on the harpsichord and as a composer. His son, Tom (declared by Mozart to be a prodigy), and his daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, were so excellently gifted in music, and so well trained, that Doctor Burney called their home "a nest of nightingales." The elder daughter, Miss Elizabeth Linley, frequently appeared in public oratorios at Bath, Oxford, London, and elsewhere. Her beauty, her modesty, and her "divinely sweet voice" captivated all hearts. Halhed, after hearing her sing at Oxford, wrote: "I am petrified; my very faculties are annihilated with wonder. My conception could not form such a power of voice — such a melody — such a soft yet so audible a tone!" Not only, however, was Miss Linley a "mistress of harmony"; her beauty of character was equally charming. Sheridan wrote of her: —

Courtship and marriage.

> So well her mind and voice agree
> That every thought is melody.

After her first public singing in London, the novelist Frances Burney wrote in her diary: "The whole town seems distracted about her. Every other diversion is forsaken. Miss Linley alone engrosses all eyes, ears, hearts." She was generally acclaimed the belle of the day, and was literally besieged by suitors. She was the subject of a comedy by Foote, *The Maid of Bath* (1771); was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds as St. Cecilia; was ranked by Horace Walpole "above all beauties of her day"; and was admired by the King, who declared that "he never in his life heard so fine a voice." Miss Linley was as romantic as she

was beautiful. In 1772, in order to escape from an obnoxious suitor, and to avoid singing in public oratorios, she planned to run away and take refuge in a French convent. Sheridan's sisters were let into the plot, and then Sheridan himself. Like the knight in romance, he volunteered to act as her escort thither. One rainy night the two escaped, and after a stormy voyage across the Channel, reached Calais in safety. Sheridan, who had long worshipped Miss Linley in silence, now urged his suit so eloquently that she consented to a secret marriage. Immediately after the ceremony she entered a convent in Lille, where she intended to remain until he came of age, or was able to support a wife. Soon, however, Mr. Linley appeared and conducted the young persons back to England. In consequence of the escapade Sheridan fought two duels with the disappointed suitor, and the whole incident became a matter of notoriety. After a year of secret courtship (for the ceremony in France was not binding) Sheridan and Miss Linley were formally united according to the rites of the Church of England, and began housekeeping in a modest cottage at East Burnham.

Sheridan, now face to face with the problem of supporting a household, began to work in earnest. On November 17, 1774, he wrote to his father-in-law: "There will be a comedy of mine in rehearsal at Covent Garden [Theatre] within a few days. I did not set to work on it till within a few days of my setting out for Crome, so you may think I have not for these last six weeks been very idle." This play was *The Rivals*. On January 17, 1775, with high expectations on the part of the author and of the management, it was presented to the public at the Covent Garden Theatre.

Composes The Rivals.

But the play proved a failure. It showed clearly the inexperience of the author, it was too long by nearly an hour, it was badly performed, and, in particular, the character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger was so wretchedly acted as to call forth general disapproval. Perhaps the best way to describe its reception is to quote from one of the newspapers of the following day: [1] —

First night's failure.

[1] Quoted from W. Fraser Rae, *Sheridan's Plays*, 1902, p. xviii.

"The *Rivals*, as a Comedy, requires much castigation, and the pruning hand of judgment, before it can ever pass on the Town as even a tolerable Piece. In language it is defective to an extreme, in Plot outré and one of the *Characters* is an absolute exotic in the wilds of nature. The author seems to have considered puns, witticisms, similes and metaphors, as admirable substitutes for polished diction; hence they abound in every sentence; and hence it is that instead of the '*Met*[*a*]*morphosis*' of Ovid, one of the characters is made to talk of Ovid's 'Meat-for-Hopes,' a Lady is called the 'Pine Apple of beauty,' the Gentleman in return 'an Orange of perfection.' A Lover describes the sudden change of disposition in his Mistress by saying, that 'she flies off in a tangent born[e] down by the current of disdain'; and a second Tony Lumkin, to describe how fast he rode, compares himself to a 'Comet with a tail of dust at his heels.'

"These are shameful absurdities in language, which can suit no character, how widely soever it may depart from common life and common manners.

"Whilst thus censure is freely passed, not to say that there are various sentiments in the Piece which demonstrate the Author's no stranger to the finer feelings, would be shameful partiality.

"Time will not permit a thorough investigation of this Comedy; but if the 'Rivals' rests its claim to public favour solely on the basis of merit, the hisses of the auditors on the first night of representation give reason to suspect a most fatal disappointment. However, that it may be suffered to have the usual nine nights' run, is what, on the Author's account, we most sincerely wish; but this we can assure him, that if the dulness of law writers have made him yawn, the dulness of the 'Rivals' lulled several of the middle gallery spectators into a profound sleep." — *The Public Ledger*, January 18, 1775.

Withdrawn for revision.

Sheridan withdrew the play at once, and set to work revising it. *The Morning Post*, on January 19, 1775, announced: "The Comedy of the *Rivals*, at *Covent Garden*, is withdrawn for the present,

to undergo some severe prunings, trimmings, and patchings, before its second appearance: the Author, we are informed, seeing the general disapprobation with which it was received, was very desirous of withdrawing it entirely, but the managers would not consent to it, determined to stand the event of a second embarcation, let the consequences be what they may." The nature and extent of Sheridan's revision can only be guessed at. Some notion, however, may be obtained by comparing the present text of the play with the newspaper review just quoted.

Ten days later *The Rivals* was for a second time offered to the public. It had been thoroughly revised, much shortened, and a new actor, Clinch, had been substituted for Lee in the rôle of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. The result was a complete triumph. *The British Chronicle* records: "At the second representation of the new Comedy of the Rivals, it was received with the warmest bursts of approbation by a crowded and apparently impartial audience."[1] At once *The Rivals* became a favorite with London playgoers, and was hailed by the critics as the greatest comedy of the age.

Second performance successful.

On May 2 of the same year Sheridan produced at Covent Garden a short farce, *St. Patrick's Day*, written for a benefit performance of the actor Clinch, who, after Lee had so signally failed in the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, had assumed the rôle with unusual success. This piece, which Sheridan wrote in forty-eight hours, does not deserve much attention from students of literature. On his next work, however, produced in the same year, Sheridan put forth his best efforts. This was a comic opera, *The Duenna*, full of beautiful lyrics for which Mr. Linley composed the music. It was produced at Covent Garden on November 21, 1775, and at once met with rare success. During the first season it was acted no less than seventy-five times; and though nowadays it is never put on the stage, it was judged by contemporaries to be a wonderful performance. Sheridan's reputation was at last secure. The universal opinion of the public, as well as

St. Patrick's Day and The Duenna.

[1] Quoted from Rae, *Sheridan's Plays*, p. xxvii.

of the critics, was expressed by Doctor Johnson when he said, in proposing Sheridan for membership in the famous Literary Club, "He who has written the two best comedies of his age [*The Rivals* and *The Duenna*] is surely a considerable man."

In June, 1776, Garrick retired from the managership of the Drury Lane Theatre. Sheridan, Mr. Linley, and a friend, Doctor Ford, bought Garrick's half-interest in the theatre, and Sheridan, aged twenty-five, was given the important post of manager. This position he retained, with varying degrees of success and failure, virtually throughout the rest of his life.

Manager of Drury Lane.

The public awaited with high expectations the next play from the hands of the new manager. After a considerable delay this came on May 8, 1777, as *The School for Scandal.* It more than filled the expectations of the audience, and added greatly to the reputation of its author. It is a better play than *The Rivals*, and stands without dispute as Sheridan's masterpiece. Even to-day it maintains its popularity with playgoers, and holds a prominent place among the stock-comedies of our stage.

The School for Scandal.

On October 30, 1779, Sheridan produced *The Critic*, a comedy modeled on the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal.* It is clever throughout, and though now rarely acted, was at the time a notable success. It deserves to rank next to *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* as Sheridan's best work.

The Critic.

Sheridan, though still in his twenties, had shown himself to be the greatest playwright of the age. He was the son of an actor, was the manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, and was a large shareholder in its patent. Everything seemed to mark out for him a brilliant career as a dramatist. Suddenly, however, he abandoned this promising career. He had written his last original play, and though he continued to be manager of Drury Lane, he turned all his energies to politics. In 1780 he secured a seat in Parliament. Eleven days later he made his first speech, and revealed his powers of oratory. Two months later he was elected a member of Brooks's

Abandons play-writing for politics.

Club, the most powerful and exclusive political club of the day, at whose meetings the leaders of the Whig Party decided affairs of state. Two years later he was given the important office of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. His career in politics cannot interest us in its minute details; suffice it to say that for a quarter of a century he was one of the most conspicuous figures in Parliament, and one of its most brilliant orators, sharing fame with Charles Fox, William Pitt, the younger, and Edmund Burke.

The climax of his career was marked by his two brilliant orations against Warren Hastings. Their effect may be illustrated by a quotation from Sir Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto, at the time a member of Parliament. After hearing Sheridan's speech he wrote to his wife: "This last night, though the House was up soon after one, and I was in bed before two, I have not slept *one wink*. Nothing whatever was the matter with me, except the impression of what had been passing still vibrating on my brain. . . . Sheridan opened his charge, and spoke exactly five hours and a half, with such fluency and rapidity that I think his speech could not be read in double the time. You may imagine the quantity of matter it contained. It was by many degrees the most excellent and astonishing performance I ever heard, and surpasses all I ever imagined possible in eloquence and ability. This is the *universal* sense of all who heard it. You will conceive how admirable it was when I tell you that he surpassed, I think, Pitt, Fox, and even Burke, in his finest and most brilliant orations. . . . It is impossible to describe the feelings he excited. The *bone* rose repeatedly in my throat, and tears in my eyes — not of grief, but merely of strongly excited sensibility; so they were in Dudley Long's, who is not, I should think, particularly tearful. The conclusion, in which the whole force of the case was collected, and where his whole powers were employed to their utmost stretch, and indeed his own feelings wound to the utmost pitch, worked the House up into such a paroxysm of passionate enthusiasm on the subject, and of admiration for him, that the moment he sat down there was a universal shout, nay, even clapping, for half-a-

Power as an orator.

second; every man was on the floor, and all his friends throwing themselves on his neck in raptures of joy and exultation. This account is not at all exaggerated, and hardly does justice to, I daresay, the most remarkable scene ever exhibited, either there or in any other popular assembly."[1] That Sir Gilbert did not exaggerate we have ample evidence. Burke declared that the speech was "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit united, of which there was any record or tradition"; Pitt wrote that it was "without exception one of the most wonderful performances I ever heard, and almost the greatest imaginable exertion of the human mind"; and Fox, with characteristic enthusiasm, asserted that "all that he had ever heard, all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapour before the sun." Parliament voted to adjourn until the next day, for the avowed reason that its members could not fairly and dispassionately vote on the question while under the spell of the oration. Yet when Sheridan's speeches are read nowadays they are strangely disappointing, and when compared with the speeches of Burke they seem pale and ineffectual. Accordingly Mr. Saintsbury has referred to his oratory as "theatrical and rather brassy." It cannot be denied, however, that Sheridan exercised over his hearers a power of oratory unsurpassed in the records of Parliament.

Naturally Sheridan's intense interest in politics led to his neglect of Drury Lane. In fact, the only thing that saved his management from disaster was the brilliant group of actors he had got together. Finally, to retrieve the finances of the theatre after a series of misfortunes, he turned his hand again to the playwright's art. This time he contented himself with adapting from the German two comedies of Kotzebue, *The Strangers* (1798) and *Pizarro* (1799). Though adaptations, and consequently not to be reckoned in his list of original works, these plays showed clearly that he had lost none of his skill as a dramatist. They created a sensation

The Strangers and Pizarro.

[1] From *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto*, i. 123–4. Quoted in Rae, *Life*, ii, 60.

among the playgoers, and for the time replenished the empty coffers of the theatre.

Last years.

The last years of Sheridan's life were clouded in domestic, political, and pecuniary troubles. He lost his wife, and married again somewhat unhappily; he watched his beloved son Tom yield slowly to the ravages of consumption; he himself suffered continuously from a painful disorder. In politics he formed a baleful friendship with the unworthy Prince of Wales; his party was out of power; and his alliances within the party were unfortunate. In his pecuniary affairs he became involved in difficulties that led to his ultimate ruin. In 1791 Drury Lane Theatre was condemned as unsafe, and had to be reconstructed at a heavy expense. In 1809 it was totally destroyed by fire, and with it a large part of Sheridan's fortune. When the theatre was rebuilt, new officials assumed charge, and Sheridan was forced out. Moreover, the sum of money due him for his share was wrongfully withheld. By 1812 Sheridan's affairs were in so bad a state that he could not pay the expenses of a re-election to Parliament. In 1813 he was actually arrested for debt, and for a short time confined in a sponging-house. His career was now over. Shut out from the theatre and from politics, besieged by creditors, harassed by domestic sorrows, and suffering from a painful malady, he dragged his life to an unhappy end. Even as he lay dying, a sheriff with a writ of debt took up lodging in the house. He passed away quietly on July 7, 1816, at the age of sixty-five. From the shore of Lake Geneva Byron wrote: —

> A mighty Spirit is eclipsed — a Power
> Hath passed from day to darkness — to whose hour
> Of light no likeness is bequeathed — no name,
> Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
> The flash of Wit — the bright Intelligence,
> The beam of Song — the blaze of Eloquence,
> Set with their Sun, but still have left behind
> The enduring produce of immortal Mind.

His funeral was attended with magnificent pomp, and he was laid with honor in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

II

THE RIVALS

The Rivals is "a comedy of intrigue" in which the action turns upon humorous deception. The audience is let into the secret at the outset, and thus allowed to enjoy the pleasure of witnessing those not in the secret make themselves ridiculous; of anticipating the surprise of the ultimate discovery; of relishing the innumerable *double-entendres;* and of sympathizing with the hero when he is treading, so to speak, on thin ice. There is a continual bustle of action, mixed with surprises, and an ever-complicating plot. In many respects the play is strikingly like the comedies of Terence and Plautus, in which the young hero and heroine, by a series of ingenious devices, outwit their parents or guardians; and the similarity is heightened by the presence of clever servants.

A comedy of intrigue.

Secondly, *The Rivals* is "a comedy of humours," a type developed by Ben Jonson and frequently employed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The term "humour" was applied to some habitual oddity of character or of manner which rendered a person more or less absurd. In *The Rivals* most of the *dramatis personæ* exhibit for our amusement clearly marked "humours": Acres in his foppishness and his "referential oaths"; Mrs. Malaprop, in her misuse of big words, and her refrain "don't become a young woman"; Sir Anthony Absolute, in his irascibility — his "absolutism"; Lydia Languish, in her ultra-romantic temperament; Sir Lucius O'Trigger, in his self-assurance and his love of quarrels; and Faulkland, in his absurd jealousy and alternating moods. These "humours" are well sustained throughout the play.

A comedy of humours.

Thirdly, *The Rivals* is "a comedy of wit." Interest, it is true, is maintained in the plot; but the life of the play is in the dialogue. We delight primarily in the volleys of wit, in the keen but good-natured satire, and in the all-pervading spirit of fun. Many of the

A comedy of wit.

epigrammatic sayings of the characters have passed into our ordinary speech, and others, we find, linger pleasantly in our memory.

Finally, *The Rivals* is "a comedy of society"; that is, the mirror is held up to the fashionable world in its distinctively social functions. Perhaps *The School for Scandal* is an even better example of this type of comedy. The two plays together, it may be said, reflect the contemporary fashionable life of the two great capitals of English society, — Bath, with its free and easy cosmopolitanism, and London, with its brilliant drawing-room artificiality.

A comedy of society.

"The scope and immediate object of a play," says Sheridan in his Preface, "is to please a mixed assembly in Representation." Judged by this standard, *The Rivals* has thoroughly succeeded. For nearly a century and a half it has kept its place in our theatrical repertory, always effective when adequately presented. Its sudden surprises, clever groupings of persons, strong contrasts of character, keen thrusts of satire, and rapid fireworks of wit make it in action a grand *tour de force* that is well-nigh irresistible.

Success on the stage.

But the play must be submitted also, as Sheridan grants, to "the cooler tribunal of the Study." Here it does not fare quite so well, for the reader who judges the play as literature finds along with its excellent qualities certain grave faults. These faults are due primarily, it would seem, to the inexperience of the author. Indeed, from a young man of twenty-three, unfamiliar with the theatre, and composing his first play, we could not expect the finish of a master. The remarkable thing is that the play is so excellent.

Faults as literature.

To inexperience, surely, is due the first fault that we observe: the machinery of the play is too evident. We realize too often that the characters are talking not to each other, but at the audience; we see constantly the dramatist striving through asides and monologues to convey to us certain necessary information; and we feel throughout the general movement of the plot the presence of some one

AN
ACCURATE PLAN
of the
CITY of BATH
for May 1776
References
1 The Abbey
2 St. James's
3 St. Michael's
4 Walcot
5 L. Huntingdon's
6 St. Margaret's
7 St. Mary's
8 Octagon
9 St. John's
Church
Chapel
10 Presbyterian
11 Baptist
12 Quakers
13 Moravian
Meeting
14 Bell Tree House
15 Kings & Queen's
16 Hot & Crofs
17 Dk. of Kingston's
Bath's
18 Pump Room
19 General
20 St. Catherine's & Bellots
Hospital.
21 Grammar
22 Charity
23 Riding
School
24 Guild Hall
25 Poultry & Fish
26 Green
Market
27 Bulter &c.
28 Shambles
29 Gydes
30 Haywards
Rooms
31 Theatre
32 Post Office
33 Bath
34 Bath & Som.
Bank
35 Cold Bath
36 Cruttwell's Print. Office
To Walcot
ROYAL CRESCENT
CIRCUS
Barton Fields
Brock St.
Queen Square
Gay St.
Milsom St.
Bennet Street
Alfred Street
George St.
York Build.
Parades
Grosvenor Pl.
Walcot
London R.
The Prison
Bath-wick Fields
New Road
Spring Gardens
Avon
QUEEN SQUARE
Chapel
Trim Street
Beaufort Sq.
Barrack St.
Wade's Passage
Hot Bath
Cross Bath
Hetling Court
Westgate Str.
Orchard St.
GRAND PARADE
S. PARADE
Kings Mead
Milk Street
Avon Street
Queen Sq.
Back St.
Oakfield St.
The Key
The Ham
Bridge
Bath Road
Walls Road
Bradford Road
Monmouth
New King Str.
James
Street
Kingsmead Str.
Kingsmead
Terrace
Walk
Pump Yd.
Post way to Widcombe & Lyncombe

MAP OF BATH

behind the scenes. In short, the young playwright had not yet acquired "the art that conceals art."

A second fault, obvious on reading the play, is the artificiality of the language. The servants, for example, are far too keen at repartee, and their wit is of a nature quite impossible in country menials. This in some measure may be excused, perhaps, on the plea that the whole play moves on a level of wit much higher than in actual life, and that in the midst of the general display of cleverness even the servants may indulge in epigram and repartee. The explanation, however, does not fully excuse. Again, in quite a different way, Faulkland and Julia are artificial. They speak in stilted rhetoric and elaborate figures. Take, for example, Julia's closing speech: —

"Then let us study to preserve it so: and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future Bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting. — When Hearts deserving Happiness would unite their fortune, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier Rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its Leaves are dropt!" Certainly no young lady ever spoke in this fashion, and even the fact that Faulkland and Julia represent the sentimental muse does not condone such artificiality. The other characters, also, are apt now and then to speak rhetorically.

Again, the humor of the play is often exaggerated to the point of improbability, or sheer impossibility. For example, Mrs. Malaprop's misuse of words is at times overdone:

"I laid my positive *conjunction* on her, never to think on the fellow again; — I have since laid Sir Anthony's *preposition* before her; — but, I 'm sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every *particle* that I enjoin her."

"Well, Sir Anthony, since *you* desire it, we will not anticipate the past; — so mind, young people — our retrospection will now be all to the future."

Surely there is too much method in this "derangement

of epitaphs." Moreover, Bob Acres's "referential oaths," though invariably humorous, leave an impression that they are "above the speaker's capacity."

"*David.* But put the case that he kills me!—by the Mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy!

"*Acres.* No, David — in that case!— Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave."

"*Sir Lucius.* Would you chuse to be pickled and sent home? — or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

"*Acres.* Pickled! — Snug lying in the Abbey! — Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!"

We smile at these ingenious oaths, yet at the same time are quite aware of their improbability.

Relation to the sentimental comedy.

The English stage in the latter half of the eighteenth century was overrun with the so-called Sentimental Comedy — the French *comédie larmoyante.* It presented to the audience impossible characters, speaking in an artificial, "genteel" language, and moving in an atmosphere surcharged with virtue. Apparently its main purposes were to teach morality, and to make the spectators "weep a flood." Against this prevailing sentimental comedy a warfare had been waged for some years. Goldsmith, in *The Good Natur'd Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), had struck the hardest blows. But others, also, had joined in the battle; notably Samuel Foote, who had produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1773 an amusing burlesque of the sentimental in his farce *The Handsome Housemaid; or Piety in Pattens*, in which "a maiden of low degree, by the mere effects of morality and virtue, raised herself to riches and honours."[1] *The Rivals* carried on the work of Goldsmith and Foote, and helped to give the finishing blows to the prevailing moral-lachrymose comedy. This fact Sheridan

[1] This is not extant; for a discussion of it, and of the sentimental comedy, see John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, v, 374–6.

clearly acknowledges in his second prologue, in which he makes fun of

> The goddess of the woful countenance —
> The sentimental Muse.

Yet, as a concession, it would seem, to those who demanded sentimentality, Sheridan introduced in the characters of Julia and Faulkland a sentimental sub-plot. The actor Bernard, who witnessed the first performance of *The Rivals*, wrote some years later: "It must be remembered that this was the English 'age of sentiment,' and Kelly and Cumberland had flooded the stage with moral poems under the title of comedies, which took their views of life from the drawing-room exclusively, and coloured their characters with a nauseous French affectation. 'The Rivals' was an attempt to overthrow this taste, and to follow up the blow which Goldsmith had given in 'She Stoops to Conquer.' My recollection of the manner in which the former [*The Rivals*] was received, bears me out in the supposition. The audience on this occasion were composed of two parties — those who supported the prevailing taste, and those who were indifferent to it and liked nature. The consequence was that Faulkland and Julia (which Sheridan had obviously introduced to conciliate the sentimentalists) were the characters which were the most favourably received." [1]

Sentimental sub-plot.

It must not be overlooked, however, that Faulkland and Julia serve also as foils to Captain Absolute and Lydia, and as such have full dramatic justification. The romantic courtship of the one pair of lovers stands out vividly and humorously against the sentimental courtship of the other pair. Each gains much from the contrast. Furthermore, the sub-plot may be regarded as comic. It approaches, indeed, very near to a satire on the sentimental, a fact recognized by the critic of *The Morning Chronicle* (January 18, 1775), when he wrote: "The characters of Faulkland and Julia are even beyond the pitch of *sentimental* comedy." In modern productions of the play this sub-plot

[1] Quoted in Fitzgerald's *The Lives of the Sheridans*, i, 119–20.

is commonly reduced to a minimum: yet there is no reason why the present-day reader should not enjoy the parts of Faulkland and Julia, both as a foil to Absolute and Lydia, and as a comic satire on the sentimental.

Sources.

In the preface to *The Rivals* Sheridan says: "Many other errors there were, which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre. Yet I own that in one respect I did not regret my ignorance: for as my first wish in attempting a Play was to avoid every appearance of plagiary, I thought I should stand a better chance of effecting this from being in a walk which I had not frequented, and where consequently the progress of invention was less likely to be interrupted by starts of recollection." From this we might infer that a discussion of the sources of *The Rivals* would be superfluous. Such, however, is not the case, for though Sheridan did not borrow much from outside sources, he did utilize material from within the family.

Part of the play, we know, came from an earlier attempt. On November 17, 1774, he wrote to his father-in-law, Mr. Linley: "I had not written a line of it two months ago, except a scene or two, which, I believe, you have seen in an odd act of a little farce." Of this "little farce" we know absolutely nothing. Apparently it was an early attempt at a play, resembling *The Rivals* in some of its scenes.

Again, part of the play came from his mother's unfinished and unpublished comedy, *A Journey to Bath.*[1] Here, in the character of Mrs. Tryfort, "the fondest of hard words, which without *mis*calling, she always takes care to misapply," he found Mrs. Malaprop, with "her select words so ingeniously *misapplied*, without being *mispronounced*." He has Mrs. Malaprop repeat in *The Rivals* eight of the word blunders made by Mrs. Tryfort. Moreover, he got from Mrs. Tryfort Mrs. Malaprop's character-tag, "don't become a young woman." It is more than

[1] First printed by W. F. Rae, in *Sheridan's Plays*, 1902.

possible, too, that he found in Ned Bull, of Bull Hall, the suggestion of Bob Acres, of Clod Hall; compare, for example, *The Rivals*, ii, 1 and iii, 4, with *A Journey to Bath*, iii, 1 and iii, 11. Actual verbal borrowings are obvious in at least two places:

"If I had Blunderbus Hall here, I could show you a range of ancestry." — *The Rivals*, iii, 4.

"If I had your ladyship at Bull-hall, I could show you a line of ancestry." — *A Journey to Bath*, p. 311.

"Though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank heaven our honor and the family-pictures are as fresh as ever." — *The Rivals*, iii, 4.

"Why the land and the Mansion house has slipped thro' our fingers, boy: but thank heaven the family pictures are still extant." — *A Journey to Bath*, p. 312.

To a much less extent Sheridan was indebted to his mother's novel, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*. The name Faulkland undoubtedly came from this source, with possibly some suggestion of his character. The Faulkland of the novel is thus described:[1] "His ideas of love, honour, generosity, and gratitude, are so refined, that no hero in romance ever went beyond him." From the novel also, perhaps, came a few "starts of recollection" that embodied themselves in the play. Thus, in *Sidney Bidulph* Faulkland, after having killed a man, rushes before the woman he loves and dramatically exclaims: "You see a man whose life is forfeited to the law." In *The Rivals* Faulkland appears before Julia under the pretense of having killed a man, and declares: "You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited." The situations are quite similar. Again, in the novel, Faulkland, the second, is represented as jealous of his beloved Cecilia's being "the life of the whole family" and exhibiting a "constant flow of spirits."[2] This occurs also in *The Rivals*, ii, 1. In general, however, the indebtedness of the play to the novel is slight.

[1] Ed. 1761, vol. iii, p. 242.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iv, pp. 122, 128.

Attempts have been made to prove that Sheridan was indebted to numerous other sources. It may be true that he had read, or seen on the stage, a number of plays, and that "faded ideas" from these plays "floated" in his memory "like half-forgotten dreams." But that he was guilty of any close borrowing seems altogether doubtful.

III

THE TEXT OF THE RIVALS

The original manuscript of *The Rivals* as presented on January 17, 1775, has been lost; consequently we have no means of knowing what changes Sheridan made in revising the play for its second performance. The chief complaint of the newspaper critics, however, seems to have been that the play was too long — according to *The Morning Chronicle*, "a *full hour* longer in representation than any piece on the stage." To reduce the play by an hour, something like the suppressing of whole scenes, or the condensing of two scenes into one, may have been necessary. In the first edition the scenes are misnumbered in such a way (in act iii, scene 4 is omitted, in act iv, scene 3) as to suggest that possibly Sheridan eliminated, by suppression or combination, two scenes, and forgot to renumber the remaining ones. Of minor alterations in text a slight notion may be obtained by comparing the present text of the play with the various newspaper criticisms of the first performance.

After the triumph of the play on its second production, January 28, 1775, Sheridan himself prepared the manuscript for the press, and added a modestly-worded Preface in which he defended himself and the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre against certain charges occasioned by the first night's failure. In all probability he prepared this edition with care, for, in a sense, his reputation as a playwright was at stake. It was published in London by John Wilkie in 1775, and is now one of the rare editions in our literature, fetching on the market from $50 to $250.

In the same year appeared the so-called second edition, in reality nothing but a later issue of the first edition, from the same setting of type, and differing merely in having inserted upon the title-page the words "The Second Edition."

In 1776 appeared "The Third Edition, Corrected." This seems to represent the stage version of the play as then acted. It contains the Serjeant-at-Law prologue in a slightly modified form; prints for the first time the "Prologue spoken on the Tenth Night"; makes a few unimportant changes in text; and, most noticeable of all, omits a large number of passages. These omissions doubtless represent the "cuts" made by the actors.

In 1821 Murray published in two volumes a very attractive edition of Sheridan's works, with an introduction by Thomas Moore. *The Rivals* was printed from the third, or "truncated" edition, but with various modernizations and certain textual changes by the editor. All subsequent reprints of *The Rivals* (with two exceptions, to be spoken of hereafter) go back directly or indirectly to this Murray edition, hence reproduce a text that is neither complete nor in any sense authoritative.

In 1902 Fraser Rae issued *Sheridan's Plays, now printed as he wrote them.* (The title on the cover is *Sheridan's Plays First Printed from His MSS.*) In his Prefatory Notes Rae says: "In the preface to my Biography of Sheridan I described how much information I had obtained from the library at Frampton Court, where many of Sheridan's manuscripts are very carefully preserved. Sheridan's grandfather [=grandson] gave much time and care to arranging the manuscripts of 'The Rivals,' 'The Duenna,' 'The School for Scandal,' and 'The Critic,' and he had them bound in handsome volumes." The word "grandfather" was obviously a slip of the pen, for both of Sheridan's grandfathers were dead long before *The Rivals* was written. Mrs. Algernon Sheridan writes me from Frampton Court: "What Rae can have had in mind when he spoke of Sheridan's grandfather arranging the manuscripts one does not know: possibly he meant that

his grandson did so, which is undoubtedly true of every other play except *The Rivals*." And that Rae did mean "grandson" is shown clearly on page xxxviii of his edition. To this statement about the manuscript of *The Rivals* preserved along with the other plays, Rae adds: "The only important manuscript of which there is no trace is that of 'The Rivals,' which was acquired by Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, the manuscript being probably destroyed when that theatre was burnt to the ground." Then, without further explanation, he prints, along with the text of the other plays preserved in manuscript at Frampton Court, a text of *The Rivals* which differs from that of all previous editions.

Although Rae does not actually say so, and, I believe, did not intend to deceive any one, the plain inference from his statements, and from his entire edition, is that although one manuscript of *The Rivals* (the original manuscript put into the hands of Mr. Harris, the manager of the theatre) was destroyed, another manuscript (possibly the manuscript of the play as rewritten, or possibly some transcript) still exists; that it was arranged by Sheridan's grandson, was handsomely bound along with the other extant manuscripts, and is preserved with them at Frampton Court; and, finally, that it is reproduced "with absolute fidelity" in *Sheridan's Plays, now printed as he wrote them.*

Consequently, when Professor Nettleton issued his admirable edition of *The Major Dramas of Sheridan* in *The Athenæum Press Series*, 1906) he accepted the text of Rae's edition as having been printed from "the original manuscript." In a prefatory note he says: "The text of *The Rivals* in this edition is taken, by Mr. Fraser Rae's generous permission, from his *Sheridan's Plays, now printed as he wrote them* (London, 1902). Of this book he once wrote me: 'I copied Sheridan's text in order that a reader might have it before him, just as he would do if he had the original manuscript.' This text — 'Sheridan's version, printed with absolute fidelity,' as his Prefatory Notes describe it — I have tried to reproduce with like fidelity."

But absolutely no manuscript of *The Rivals* exists. Rae himself says in his *Sheridan, a Biography* (London, 1896, i, 287): "Moore makes a remark which I regretfully confirm: 'Strange! that *The Rivals* should be the only one of his pieces of which there appears to be no traces in his papers.'" Mr. Sichel, in his recent biography, is even more specific (*Sheridan*, i, 495): "The autograph of 'The Rivals' is said to have been burned at Covent Garden Theatre, and no manuscript is known to exist." Furthermore, I have a definite statement from the Sheridan family that no manuscript of *The Rivals* is preserved at Frampton Court, nor, indeed, is one known by them to exist anywhere.

There is, however, preserved at Frampton Court a copy of the first edition "with annotations — apparently in his [Sheridan's] wife's handwriting — on the margin."[1] Thus, opposite Mrs. Malaprop's misquotation from *Hamlet* is written: "Overdone — fitter for farce than comedy." And on Acres' classification of oaths, the comment is made: "Very good, but above the speaker's capacity."[2] Rae does not mention this copy, and does not reproduce either its text or its annotations.

In preparing his text Rae seems to have clipped and pasted down some modern reprint, which, like all other modern reprints, reproduced the Murray two-volume edition of 1821, with its alterations of text, and with modernized punctuation and stage-directions.[3] Then from the first edition he inserted the omitted passages. Finally, with much inconsistency and great carelessness, he introduced here and there corrections from the first edition. In general, however, his text represents the modern text that he pasted, with its modern punctuation and stage directions, and accumulated verbal errors. In printing, too, Rae carelessly dropped out a number of words, and allowed addi-

[1] Sichel, *Sheridan*, i, 489. This copy, however, belonged to Tickell. Sheridan's brother-in-law, and Moore believed that the annotations were in the handwriting of Tickell.

[2] Moore, *Memoirs of the Life of Sheridan*, ch. iii; Fitzgerald, *The Lives of the Sheridans*, i, 496.

[3] For the purposes of comparison one may use the Bohn or the Temple edition.

tional errors to creep in.[1] Obviously such a text has no scholarly value.[2]

The present volume undertakes to reproduce accurately the text of the first edition. All verbal changes from this edition are noted on page 130. The punctuation has been modernized to some extent, for there seems to be no advantage in preserving the careless punctuation of the original printer. A few stage-directions (also noted on page 130) have been inserted where such would obviously assist the reader in understanding the play.

[1] For a comment on Rae's carelessness in reprinting, the reader is referred to Sichel, *Sheridan*, i, 492; Mr. Sichel shows, with quotations, that Rae's reprint of Mrs. Sheridan's *A Journey to Bath* is "full of inaccuracies."

[2] For a more detailed discussion of Rae's text see an article by the present writer, "The Text of *The Rivals*," in *Modern Language Notes*, vol. xxv.

THE

RIVALS,

A

COMEDY.

As it is ACTED at the

Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

LONDON:
Printed for JOHN WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-Yard.
MDCCLXXV.

Facsimile of the title-page of the first edition

THE RIVALS

PREFACE

A PREFACE to a Play seems generally to be considered as a kind of Closet-prologue, in which — if his Piece has been successful — the Author solicits that indulgence from the Reader which he had before experienced from the Audience. But as the scope and immediate object of a Play is to please a mixed assembly in *Representation* (whose judgment in the Theatre at least is decisive), its degree of reputation is usually as determined as public, before it can be prepared for the cooler tribunal of the Study. Thus any farther solicitude on the part of the Writer becomes unnecessary at least, if not an intrusion: and if the Piece has been condemned in the Performance, I fear an Address to the Closet, like an Appeal to Posterity, is constantly regarded as the procrastination of a suit from a consciousness of the weakness of the cause. From these considerations, the following Comedy would certainly have been submitted to the Reader without any further introduction than what it had in the Representation, but that its success has probably been founded on a circumstance which the Author is informed has not before attended a theatrical trial, and which, consequently, ought not to pass unnoticed.

I need scarcely add that the circumstance alluded to was the withdrawing of the Piece [1] to remove those imperfections in the first Representation which were too obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction. There are few writers, I believe, who, even in the fullest consciousness of error, do not wish to palliate the faults which they acknowledge; and, however trifling the performance, to second their confession of its deficiencies by whatever plea seems least disgraceful to their ability. In the present instance it cannot be said to amount either to candour or modesty in me to acknowledge an extreme inexperience [2] and

[1] **withdrawing of the Piece**: see *Introduction*, p. ix.

[2] **extreme inexperience**: *The Rivals* was Sheridan's first play, written when he was twenty-three years of age.

want of judgment on matters, in which, without guidance from practice, or spur from success, a young man should scarcely boast of being an adept. If it be said that under such disadvantages no one should attempt to write a play — I must beg leave to dissent from the position ; while the first point of experience that I have gained on the subject is a knowledge of the candour and judgment with which an impartial Public distinguishes between the errors of inexperience and incapacity, and the indulgence which it shews even to a disposition to remedy the defects of either.

It were unnecessary to enter into any farther extenuation of what was thought exceptionable in this Play, but that it has been said that the Managers should have prevented some of the defects before its appearance to the Public — and in particular the uncommon length[1] of the piece as represented the first night. It were an ill return for the most liberal and gentlemanly conduct on their side to suffer any censure to rest where none was deserved. Hurry in writing has long been exploded as an excuse for an Author ; — however, in the dramatic line it may happen that both an Author and a Manager may wish to fill a chasm in the entertainment of the Public with a hastiness not altogether culpable. The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's[2] hands : — it was at that time at least double the length of any acting comedy. — I profited by his judgment and experience in the curtailing of it — 'till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young Author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining, because he had assisted in pruning so many more. Hence, though I was not uninformed that the Acts were still too long, I flatter'd myself that, after the first trial, I might with safer judgment proceed to remove what should appear to have been most dissatisfactory. — Many other errors there were, which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre. Yet I own that in one respect I did not regret my ignorance : for as my first wish in attempting a

[1] **uncommon length** : A critic in *The Morning Chronicle* (January 20, 1775) remarks : "And the play itself is a *full hour* longer in the representation than any piece on the stage. — This last circumstance is an error of such a nature as shows either great obstinacy in the Author, or excessive ignorance in the managers."

[2] **Mr. Harris** : the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre.

Play was to avoid every appearance of plagiary, I thought I should stand a better chance of effecting this from being in a walk which I had not frequented, and where consequently the progress of invention was less likely to be interrupted by starts of recollection: for on subjects on which the mind has been much informed, invention is slow of exerting itself. Faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams; and the imagination in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted.

With regard to some particular passages which on the First Night's Representation seemed generally disliked, I confess that if I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I had not before perceived that they deserved it. As some part of the attack on the Piece was begun too early to pass for the sentence of *Judgment*, which is ever tardy in condemning, it has been suggested to me that much of the disapprobation must have arisen from virulence of Malice,[1] rather than severity of Criticism: but as I was more apprehensive of there being just grounds to excite the latter, than conscious of having deserved the former, I continue not to believe that probable, which, I am sure, must have been unprovoked. However, if it was so, and I could even mark the quarter from whence it came, it would be ungenerous to retort; for no passion suffers more than malice from disappointment. For my own part, I see no reason why the Author of a Play should not regard a First Night's Audience as a candid and judicious friend attending, in behalf of the Public, at his last Rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity, and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment. Considered in this light, that Audience, whose *fiat* is essential to the Poet's claim whether his object be Fame or Profit,

[1] **virulence of Malice**: The newspaper accounts of the first performance give ample testimony to this fact. "There seemed to be a little malice from one corner of the gallery, which shewed itself too early to produce any effect." — *The Morning Chronicle* (Jan. 20, 1775). "The first night of performing his comedy they took particular care to station the serpents of envy in every corner of the house." — *The Morning Post* (Jan. 31, 1775). "Several people in the galleries, who were evidently planted to disturb the performance, were turned out before the third act." — *The London Chronicle* (Jan. 21–24, 1775).

has surely a right to expect some deference to its opinion, from principles of Politeness at least, if not from Gratitude.

As for the little puny Critics who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every Author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-swoln from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks, which should place them as far beneath the notice of a Gentleman as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful Author.

It is not without pleasure that I catch at an opportunity of justifying myself from the charge of intending any national reflection[1] in the character of Sir *Lucius O'Trigger*. If any Gentlemen opposed the Piece from that idea, I thank them sincerely for their opposition; and if the condemnation of this Comedy (however misconceived the provocation) could have added one spark to the decaying flame of national attachment to the country supposed to be reflected on, I should have been happy in its fate; and might with truth have boasted that it had done more real service in its failure than the successful morality of a thousand stage-novels will ever effect.

It is usual, I believe, to thank the Performers in a new Play for the exertion of their several abilities. But where (as in this instance) their merit has been so striking and uncontroverted as to call for the warmest and truest applause from a number of judicious Audiences, the Poet's after-praise comes like the feeble acclamation of a child to close the shouts of a multitude. The conduct, however, of the Principals in a Theatre cannot be so apparent to the Public. I think it, therefore, but justice to declare that from this Theatre (the only one I can speak of from experience) those

[1] **national reflection**. Some persons took offense at the character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, seeing in him an attack on the Irish nation. One correspondent, writing to *The Morning Post* (Jan. 21, 1775) says: "*Sir Lucius O'Trigger* was so ungenerous an attack upon a nation, that must justify any severity with which the piece will hereafter be treated: it is the first time I ever remember to have seen so villainous a portrait of an Irish Gentleman, permitted so openly to insult that country upon the boards of an English theatre. For the rest of the piece, the author has my pity, but for this unjustifiable attack, my warmest resentment."

Writers who wish to try the Dramatic Line will meet with that candour and liberal attention which are generally allowed to be better calculated to lead genius into excellence, than either the precepts of judgment, or the guidance of experience.

THE AUTHOR.

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

Spoken by Mr. WOODWARD and Mr. QUICK

Enter Serjeant at Law and Attorney.

Serj. WHAT's here! — a vile cramp hand! I cannot see
Without my spectacles.
Att. [*Aside*] He means his fee.
Nay, Mr. Serjeant, good Sir, try again. [*Gives money.*
Serj. The scrawl improves. [*More*] O come, 'tis pretty plain.
How's this? The Poet's Brief *again!* O ho!
Cast, I suppose?
Att. O pardon me — No — No —
We found the Court, o'erlooking stricter laws,
Indulgent to the *merits* of the Cause;
By *Judges* mild, unus'd to harsh denial,
A Rule was granted for *another trial.*
Serj. Then hark'ee, *Dibble*, did you *mend* your *Pleadings?*
Errors, no few, we've *found* in our *Proceedings.*

Serjeant at Law: a lawyer of the highest rank. **Attorney**: a legal agent who prepared the case (the brief) for the Serjeant at Law, but who did not have the privilege of pleading the case in open court.

5. **again**: referring to the second production of the play ten nights after its failure. See the *Introduction*, p. x.

6. **Cast**: defeated in a law suit. "I have resolved never to go to law with a beggar or a lord: the one will never be cast, and the other you will get nothing by casting." — Fielding, *Temple Beau* (1730), quoted in *N. E. D.*

Att. Come, courage, Sir, we did *amend* our *Plea*,
Hence your *new Brief*, and this *refreshing Fee*.
Some Sons of Phœbus in the Courts we meet.
Serj. And fifty Sons of Phœbus in the Fleet!
Att. Nor pleads he worse, who with a decent sprig
Of Bays adorns his legal waste of wig.
Serj. Full-bottom'd Heroes thus, on signs, unfurl
A leaf of laurel in a grove of curl!
Yet tell your Client, that, in adverse days,
This Wig is warmer than a bush of Bays.
Att. Do you, then, Sir, my Client's place supply,
Profuse of robe, and prodigal of tye ——

13. **we did amend**: i. e. the play has been revised.

14. Later the Prologue was somewhat modified. Lines 5–14 were changed to read as follows :

> Hey! how's this? — *Dibble!* — sure it cannot be!
> A poet's brief! a poet and a fee!
> *Att.* Yes, sir! though you without reward, I know,
> Would gladly plead the Muse's cause.
> *Serj.* So! — so!
> *Att.* And if the fee offends, your wrath should fall
> On me.
> *Serj.* Dear Dibble, no offence at all.

15. **Sons of Phœbus**: poets. **in the Courts**: among the lawyers.

16. **in the Fleet**: a pun, alluding to (1) the well-known prison for debtors, (2) the street of that name, the centre of the publishing trade, hence frequented by authors.

18. **sprig of Bays**: poetry. **wig**: worn by English lawyers. The idea is, the lawyer who writes occasional verse is not on that account a worse lawyer.

19. **Full-bottom'd** : a wig having a large bottom. The *N. E. D.* quotes (1711): "My Banker ever bows lowest to me when I wear my full-bottom'd wig."

22. **This Wig is warmer than a bush of Bays**: i. e. Law is a more lucrative profession than poetry.

Do you, with all those blushing pow'rs of face,
And wonted bashful hesitating grace,
Rise in the Court, and flourish on the Case.

[*Exit.*

Serj. [*Addressing the audience*] For practice, then, suppose — this Brief will shew it, —
Me, Serjeant *Woodward*, — Council for the Poet.
Us'd to the ground — I know 'tis hard to deal
With this dread *Court*, from whence there's *no appeal;*
No *Tricking* here, to blunt the edge of *Law*,
Or, damn'd in *Equity* — escape by *Flaw:*
But *Judgment* given — *your Sentence* must remain;
— No *Writ of Error* lies — to *Drury-lane!*
Yet, when so kind you seem — 'tis past dispute
We gain some favour, if not *Costs of Suit.*
No spleen is here! I see no hoarded fury;
— I think I never fac'd a milder Jury!
Sad else our plight! — where frowns are transportation,
A hiss the gallows, — and a groan, damnation!

30. **Us'd to the ground:** Woodward, who spoke these lines, was an experienced actor, at this time in his fifty-eighth year, hence well "us'd" to the stage.

33. **damn'd in Equity — escape by Flaw:** i. e. damned according to justice, but allowed to escape because of some flaw in the legal proceedings.

35. **No Writ of Error lies — to Drury-lane:** i. e. If the author loses his case here in Covent Garden Theatre he cannot, on a writ of error (as having been unfairly tried), appeal to the other court, Drury Lane Theatre. At this time these were the two chief playhouses in London.

40. **transportation:** At this time transportation to the colonies was frequently the punishment of convicts.

But such the public candour, without fear
My Client waives all *right of challenge* here.
No Newsman from *our* Session is dismiss'd,
Nor Wit nor Critic *we* scratch off the list;
His faults can never hurt another's ease,
His crime at worst — a *bad attempt* to please:
Thus, all respecting, he appeals to all,
And by the general voice will *stand* or *fall.*

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

Spoken on the tenth night, by Mrs. BULKLEY

GRANTED our cause, our suit and trial o'er,
The worthy serjeant need appear no more:
In pleading I a different client choose;
He served the Poet — I would serve the Muse.
Like him, I'll try to merit your applause,
A female counsel in a female's cause.
Look on this form, — where humour, quaint and sly,
Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming eye;

43. **right of challenge**: the right that each party to a case has of refusing to allow a certain person or persons to sit in trial upon him or his cause. For good reasons such objectionable persons may be "dismissed," or "scratched off the list."

44. **Newsman**: newspaper critic.

Prologue: This Prologue was first printed in the third edition, 1776.

Mrs. Bulkley: who acted the part of Julia. She was very successful in speaking Prologues and Epilogues.

3. **pleading**: The printed form was "pleasing." Mr. Rae (*Life*, i, p. 288) gives the correct reading from a fragment in Sheridan's handwriting.

7. **Look on this form**: Pointing to the figure of Comedy. In the Covent Garden Theatre two large figures, of Comedy and

Where gay invention seems to boast its wiles
In amourous hint, and half-triumphant smiles;
While her light mask or covers satire's strokes,
Or hides the conscious blush her wit provokes.
Look on her well — does she seem form'd to teach?
Should you expect to hear this lady preach?
Is grey experience suited to her youth?
Do solemn sentiments become that mouth?
Bid her be grave, those lips should rebel prove
To every theme that slanders mirth or love.
Yet, thus adorn'd with every graceful art
To charm the fancy and yet reach the heart ——
Must we displace her, and instead advance
The goddess of the woful countenance —
The sentimental Muse? — Her emblems view,
The Pilgrim's Progress, and a sprig of rue!
View her — too chaste to look like flesh and blood —
Primly portray'd on emblematic wood!
There, fix'd in usurpation, should she stand,
She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand:
And having made her votaries weep a flood,
Good heaven! she'll end her comedies in blood —
Bid Harry Woodward break poor Dunstal's crown!
Imprison Quick, and knock Ned Shuter down;

of Tragedy, were placed on either side of the proscenium. For a picture of the stage see George Paston, *Social Caricatures on the Eighteenth Century.*

24. **Pilgrim's Progress**: i. e. a moral lesson, one of the regular features of the sentimental play. **sprig of rue**: i. e. tears. Cf. Goldsmith's query: "Which deserves the preference, — the weeping sentimental comedy so much in fashion at present, or the laughing, and even low comedy?" See the *Introduction*, p. xviii.

31. **Woodward, Dunstal, etc.**: leading actors in the play. See the *Dramatis Personæ.*

While sad Barsanti, weeping o'er the scene,
Shall stab herself — or poison Mrs. Green.
Such dire encroachments to prevent in time,
Demands the critic's voice — the poet's rhyme.
Can our light scenes add strength to holy laws?
Such puny patronage but hurts the cause:
Fair virtue scorns our feeble aid to ask;
And moral truth disdains the trickster's mask.
For here their favourite stands, whose brow severe
And sad, claims youth's respect, and pity's tear;
Who, when oppress'd by foes her worth creates,
Can point a poniard at the guilt she hates.

37. i. e. Can a comedy teach moral laws?
41. **here**: Pointing to Tragedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

Sir Anthony Absolute	Mr. Shuter.
Capt. Absolute	Mr. Woodward
Faulkland	Mr. Lewes.
Acres	Mr. Quick.
Sir Lucius O'Trigger	Mr. Clinch.[1]
Fag	Mr. Lee-Lewis.
David	Mr. Dunstal.
Coachman	Mr. Fearon.

WOMEN

Mrs. Malaprop	Mrs. Green.
Lydia Languish	Miss Barsanti.
Julia	Mrs. Bulkley.
Lucy	Mrs. Lessingham.

Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.

SCENE, *Bath.*

Time of Action, Five Hours.

[1] On the first night's performance this part was taken by Lee. See *Introduction*, pp. viii. x.

THE RIVALS

ACT I

Scene I. *A* Street *in* Bath

Coachman *crosses the stage.* — *Enter* Fag, *looking after him.*

Fag. WHAT! — Thomas! — Sure 'tis he. — What! — Thomas! — Thomas!

Coach. Hay! — Odd's life! — Mr. Fag! — give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas. — I'm dev'lish glad to see you, my lad. Why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty! — but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath!

Coach. Sure, Master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postilion be all come!

Fag. Indeed!

Coach. Aye! Master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit: — so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Aye, aye! hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute!

Coach. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young Master? Odd! Sir Anthony will stare to see the Captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Capt. Absolute now.

3. **Odd's** : a corruption of "God's."

Coach. Why sure!

Fag. At present I am employ'd by Ensign Beverley.

Coach. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coach. No! Why, didn't you say you had left young Master?

Fag. No. — Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther: — briefly then — Capt. Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coach. The devil they are!

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas; and the *Ensign* half of my master being on guard at present — the *Captain* has nothing to do with me.

Coach. So, so! — What, this is some freak, I warrant! — Do tell us, Mr. Fag, the meaning o't — you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You 'll be secret, Thomas?

Coach. As a coach-horse.

Fag. Why then the cause of all this is — Love, — Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Coach. Aye, aye; — I guessed there was a lady in the case: — but pray, why does your Master pass only for *Ensign?* — Now if he had shamm'd *General*, indeed ——

Fag. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery o' the matter.— Hark'ee, Thomas, my Master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady who likes

44. Jupiter: well known for assuming disguises on his frequent love adventures. The sentence, however, is hardly appropriate in the mouth of Fag.

him better as a *half-pay Ensign* than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet with three thousand a-year!

Coach. That is an odd taste indeed! — But has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? Is she rich, hey?

Fag. Rich! — Why, I believe she owns half the stocks! — Z—ds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easy as I could my washerwoman! — She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold, — she feeds her parrot with small pearls, — and all her thread-papers are made of bank-notes!

Coach. Bravo! — Faith! — Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least. But does she draw kindly with the Captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coach. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish. — But there is an old tough aunt in the way; — though, by the by — she has never seen my Master — for he got acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coach. Well — I wish they were once harness'd together in matrimony. — But pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? — I ha' heard a deal of it — Here's a mort o' merry-making — hey?

58. **Z—ds**: Zounds, contracted from "God's wounds."

61. **thread-papers**: strips of thin, soft paper used for wrapping up skeins of thread.

64. **set**: "Formerly used specifically of horses, to mean six as distinguished from a pair or four-in-hand." Cf. T. Lucas, in Ashton's *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*, I, iii: "He bought a most rich Coach and Curious Sett of Six Horses to it." Quoted from *The Century Dictionary*. — **of thousands**: costing thousands of guineas.

75. **mort**: a great deal.

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well — 'tis a good lounge. Though at present we are, like other great assemblies, divided into parties — High-roomians and Low-roomians. However, for my part, I have resolved to stand neuter; and so I told Bob Brush at our last committee. 81

Coach. But what do the folks do here?

Fag. Oh! there are little amusements enough.— In the morning we go to the Pump-room (though neither my Master nor I drink the waters); [85 after breakfast we saunter on the Parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance. But d—n the place, I'm tired of it: their regular hours stupify me — not a fiddle nor a card after eleven! — However Mr. Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up [90

78. **High-roomians and Low-roomians**: The two Bath assembly rooms were known as the "Lower Rooms" (kept by Gyde; cf. l. 125) and the "Upper Rooms" (kept by Hayward). The latter were finished in 1771 at a cost of more than £20,000, and soon became very fashionable. For a time, however, the town was divided into factions over them.

84. **Pump-room**: the room connected with the mineral spring, whither all persons resorted to drink the water and meet their friends. The building was erected in 1706, and enlarged in 1751. "At eight in the morning we go in *dishabille* to the Pump-room, which is crowded like a Welsh fair; and there you see the highest quality and the lowest tradesfolks jostling each other without ceremony,— hail fellow! well met! The noise of the music playing in the gallery, the heat and flavour of such a crowd, and the hum and buzz of their conversation" . . . Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker.*

86. **Parades**: (promenades) the Grand (or North) Parade, and the South Parade. See the map.

89. **not a fiddle nor a card after eleven**: Bath was primarily a *health* resort, hence the regular and early hours, strictly observed.

90. **gentleman**: servant, valet

a little in private parties. — I'll introduce you there, Thomas — you'll like him much.

Coach. Sure I know Mr. Du-Peigne — you know his Master is to marry Madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot. — But Thomas, you must polish a little — indeed you must. — Here now — this wig! what the devil do you do with a *wig*, Thomas? — None of the London whips of any degree of Ton wear *wigs* now.

Coach. More's the pity! more's the pity, I say. — Odd's life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next: — Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the Bar, I guess'd 'twould mount to the Box! — But 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr. Fag: and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine — the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coach. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of the professions ben't all of a mind — for in our village now, tho'ff *Jack Gauge*, the *exciseman*, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake his *bob*, tho' all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! But hold — mark! mark! Thomas.

98. **Ton**: fashion, high style.

103. **Odd rabbit it**: a meaningless oath.

104. **Box**: the driver's seat.

111. **tho'ff**: though. — **exciseman**: collector of excise duties, a revenue officer: hence the name "Gauge."

112. **his carrots**: his natural head of red hair.

113. **bob**: a wig having the bottom locks turned up into short curls.

Coach. Zooks! 'tis the Captain! — Is that the lady with him? 118

Fag. No! no! that is Madam Lucy — my Master's mistress's maid. — They lodge at that house. — But I must after him to tell him the news.

Coach. Odd! he's giving her money! — Well, Mr. Fag —— 123

Fag. Good bye, Thomas. — I have an appointment in Gydes' Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II. *A* Dressing-room *in* Mrs. Malaprop's *Lodgings.*

Lydia *sitting on a sopha, with a book in her hand.*— Lucy, *as just returned from a message.*

Lucy. Indeed, Ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: — I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lyd. And could not you get "*The Reward of Constancy?*" 5

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am.

Lyd. Nor "*The Fatal Connection?*"

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am.

Lyd. Nor "*The Mistakes of the Heart?*" 9

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill-luck would have it, Mr. Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetch'd it away.

117. **Zooks**: "Gadzooks," a combination with *God's;* the second element is meaningless or corrupt.

125. **Gydes' Porch**: The Lower Rooms; see note to line 78, and map.

10. **Mr. Bull**: a bookseller in Bath. (Nettleton.)

11. **Sukey**: Perhaps the name "Bull" suggested this common pet name for a cow.

Lyd. Heigh-ho! — Did you inquire for "*The Delicate Distress?*"—

Lucy. — Or "*The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?*" Yes indeed, Ma'am. — I ask'd every where for it; [15 and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-ear'd it, it wa'n't fit for a christian to read. 19

Lyd. Heigho-ho! — Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me. — She has a most observing thumb; and I believe cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. — Well, child, what *have* you brought me? 24

Lucy. Oh! here, ma'am. [*Taking books from under her cloke, and from her pockets.*] This is "*The Gordian Knot*,"—and this "*Peregrine Pickle.*" Here are "*The Tears of Sensibility*" and "*Humphry Clinker.*" This is "*The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself*," — and here the second volume of "*The Sentimental Journey.*" 31

Lyd. Heigh-ho! — What are those books by the glass?

Lucy. The great one is only "*The Whole Duty of Man*"— where I press a few blonds, Ma'am. 35

Lyd. Very well — give me the *sal volatile.*

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, Ma'am?

Lyd. My smelling bottle, you simpleton!

Lucy. Oh, the drops! — here, Ma'am.

Lyd. No note, Lucy? 40

16. **Mr. Frederick**: a Bath bookseller, and keeper of a circulating library. The subscription to these libraries was one crown a year. See Sichel, *Sheridan*, i, 201.

35. **blonds**: a kind of silk lace.

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Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am — but I have seen a certain person ——

Lyd. What, my Beverley! — Well, Lucy?

Lucy. O Ma'am! he looks so desponding and melancholic!

Lyd. Hold, Lucy! — here's some one coming — quick! see who it is. — [*Exit* Lucy.] Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

Re-enter Lucy.

Lucy. Lud! Ma'am, here is Miss Melville.

Lyd. Is it possible! ——

Enter Julia.

Lyd. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! — [*Embrace*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Jul. True, Lydia — and our pleasure is the greater. — But what has been the matter? — you were denied to me at first!

Lyd. Ah! Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! — But first inform me what has conjur'd you to Bath? — Is Sir Anthony here?

Jul. He is — we are arrived within this hour — and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dress'd.

Lyd. Then, before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress! — I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, tho' your prudence may condemn me! — My letters have inform'd [65 you of my whole connexion with Beverley; — but I have lost him, Julia! — my aunt has discover'd our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confin'd me ever since! —— Yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet [70

she met one night since we have been here, at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Jul. You jest, Lydia!

Lyd. No, upon my word. — She absolutely carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a [75 feigned name though, till she chuses to be known to him; — but it is a *Delia* or a *Celia*, I assure you.

Jul. Then surely she is now more indulgent to her niece. 79

Lyd. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague! — That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits! 84

Jul. Come, come, Lydia, hope the best. — Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

Lyd. But you have not heard the worst. Unfortunately I had quarrell'd with my poor Beverley just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since to make it up. 90

Jul. What was his offence?

Lyd. Nothing at all! — But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together we had never had a quarrel! — And somehow I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. — So last Thursday [95 I wrote a letter to myself to inform myself that Beverly was at that time paying his addresses to another

72. **rout**: a social entertainment to which many guests are invited.

97. **paying his addresses to another woman**: This passage may have been suggested to Sheridan by a letter Miss Linley had written him during their courtship: "Perhaps now whilst I am writing and amusing myself by expressing the tender sentiments which I feel for you, you are flirting with Miss

woman. — I sign'd it *your Friend unknown*, shew'd it to Beverley, charg'd him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vow'd I'd never see him more.

Jul. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lyd. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever!

Jul. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lyd. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determin'd to do ever since I knew the penalty. — Nor could I love the man who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Jul. Nay, this is caprice!

Lyd. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? — I thought her lover Faulkland had enured her to it.

Jul. I do not love even *his* faults.

Lyd. But a-propos — you have sent to him, I suppose?

Jul. Not yet, upon my word — nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. — Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden I could not inform him of it.

Lyd. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress

W., or some other handsome girl, or making fine speeches to [illegible] scold. I do not believe any such thing, but give me leave to doubt that I may with greater pleasure be convinced to the contrary." Rae, *Sheridan*, i, 189.

100–6. This explains lines 44–5.

(though under the protection of Sir Anthony), yet have you for this long year been the slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Jul. Nay, you are wrong entirely. — We were contracted before my father's death. — *That*, and some consequent embarrassments, have delay'd what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. — He is too generous to trifle on such a point. — And for his character, you wrong him there too. — No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous. If he is captious 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. — Unus'd to the foppery of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover — but being unhackney'd in the passion, his love is ardent and sincere; and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. — Yet, though his pride calls for this full return — his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him which should entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be lov'd to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not lov'd enough. — This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learn'd to think myself his debtor for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his love.

Lyd. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. — But tell me candidly, Julia, had he never sav'd your life, do you think you should have been attach'd to him as you are? — Believe me, the rude blast that

149. still: ever.

overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him!

Jul. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr. Faulkland, but I lov'd him before he had preserv'd me; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient.

Lyd. Obligation! — Why a water-spaniel would have done as much. — Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim!

Jul. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lyd. Nay, I do but jest. — What's here?

Enter Lucy *in a hurry.*

Lucy. O Ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

Lyd. They'll not come here. — Lucy do you watch. [*Exit* Lucy.

Jul. Yet I must go. — Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet he'll detain me to shew me the town. — I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me as long as she chooses with her select words so ingeniously *misapplied*, without being *mispronounced.*

Re-enter Lucy.

Lucy. O Lud! Ma'am, they are both coming up stairs.

Lyd. Well, I'll not detain you, Coz. — Adieu, my dear Julia. I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland. — There — through my room you'll find another stair-case.

176–8. A verbal reminiscence from his mother's comedy *A Journey to Bath* (i, 5, p. 273), in which Mrs. Tryfort is described as "the fondest of hard words, which without *mis*calling, she always takes care to misapply."

Jul. Adieu.— [*Embrace. Exit* Julia. 185

Lyd. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books.— Quick, quick!— Fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet — throw *Roderick Random* into the closet — put *The Innocent Adultery* into *The Whole Duty of Man* — thrust *Lord Aimworth* under the sopha — [190 cram *Ovid* behind the bolster — there — put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket — so, so,— now lay *Mrs. Chapone* in sight, and leave *Fordyce's Sermons* open on the table.

Lucy. O burn it, Ma'am! the hair-dresser has torn away as far as *Proper Pride.* 196

Lyd. Never mind — open at *Sobriety.* — Fling me *Lord Chesterfield's Letters.* — Now for 'em.

Enter Mrs. Malaprop, *and Sir* Anthony Absolute.

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate Simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling! 201

Lyd. Madam, I thought you once —

Mrs. Mal. You thought, Miss! — I don't know any

193. **Mrs. Chapone**: *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind. Addressed to a Young Lady.* 2 vols., 1773. The letters, supposed to be written by an aunt to her niece, deal with such topics as: On the first principles of religion; On the study of the Holy Scriptures; On the regulation of the heart and affections; etc. — **Fordyce's Sermons**: *Sermons to Young Women.* 2 vols., 1765.

198. **Lord Chesterfield's Letters**: *Letters written by the Earl of Chesterfield to his son, Philip Stanhope, published by Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope.* 2 vols., 1774. Sheridan was interested in these letters, and wrote unpublished comments on them. See Sichel, *Sheridan*, i, 12.

200. **deliberate**: cf. Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, ii, 3, p. 285): "Your lordship will excuse me for leaving you so deliberately."

business you have to think at all — thought does not become a young woman. The point we would re- [205
quest of you is that you will promise to forget this fellow — to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lyd. Ah! Madam! our memories are independent of our wills. — It is not so easy to forget. 209

Mrs. Mal. But I say it is, Miss. There is nothing on earth so easy as to *forget*, if a person chooses to set about it. — I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed — and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman. 216

Sir Anth. Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's order'd not! — Aye, this comes of her reading!

Lyd. What crime, Madam, have I committed to be treated thus? 221

Mrs. Mal. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it. — But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? — Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing? 226

Lyd. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion. 229

Mrs. Mal. What business have you, Miss, with *preference* and *aversion?* They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always

204. **does not become a young woman**: this tag, so frequently used by Mrs. Malaprop, is Mrs. Tryfort's (*A Journey to Bath*, ii, 2, p. 284): "taciturnity doesn't become a young man."

207. **illiterate**: a word misused by Mrs. Tryfort. (*A Journey to Bath*, ii, 2, p. 282.)

wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little *aversion*. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black-a- [235
moor — and yet, Miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! — and when it pleas'd Heav'n to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! — But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley? 240

Lyd. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Mal. Take yourself to your room. — You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours. 245

Lyd. Willingly, Ma'am. — I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit* Lydia.

Mrs. Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, Ma'am — all this is the natural consequence of teaching [250
girls to read. — Had I a thousand daughters, by Heavens! I'd as soon have them taught the black-art as their alphabet!

Mrs. Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy. 255

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library! — She had a book in each hand — they were half-bound volumes, with marbled covers! — From that moment I guess'd how full of duty I should see her mistress! 261

250. **teaching girls to read** : Perhaps Sheridan had in mind his eccentric grandfather, Dr. Chamberlaine, who forbade his daughter to be taught the alphabet. (See Rae, *Life*, i, 37.)

259. **half-bound volumes, with marbled covers** : cf. the modern phrase "yellow-backed novels."

Mrs. Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an ever-green tree of diabolical knowledge! — It blossoms through the year! — And depend on it, [265 Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. Mal. Well, but Sir Anthony, your wife, Lady Absolute, was fond of books. 269

Sir Anth. Aye — and injury sufficient they were to her, Madam. — But were I to chuse another helpmate, the extent of her erudition should consist in her knowing her simple letters, without their mischievous combinations; — and the summit of her science be — her ability to count as far as twenty. [275 The first, Mrs. Malaprop, would enable her to work *A. A.* upon my linen; — and the latter would be quite sufficient to prevent her giving me a shirt No. 1 and a stock No. 2. 279

Mrs. Mal. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically!

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony. — I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny [285 of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance — I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflamma-

279. **stock**: a stiff band formerly worn by men about the neck, in place of the modern collar and cravat.

285. **progeny**: Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, ii, 2, p. 282): "Oh, in everything ma'am he is a progeny! a perfect progeny, lady Filmot!"

289. **Fluxions**: a term in mathematics.

tory branches of learning — neither would it be [290
necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments; — But, Sir Anthony, I would send her at nine years old to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. — Then, Sir, she should have a supercilious [295
knowledge in accounts; — and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; — but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, [300
and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. — This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; — and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it. 305

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. — But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more im- [310
portant point in debate, — you say you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs. Mal. None, I assure you. — I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success. 316

294. **ingenuity and artifice**: Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, iii, 1, p. 299): "He is so ingenious and full of his artifices."

298. **contagious countries**: Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, iii, 1, p. 299): "Oh, if you were to hear him describe contagious countries as I have done, it would astonish you. He is a perfect map of geography."

Sir Anth. Well, Madam, I will write for the boy directly. — He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection! — let him object if he dare! — No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple — in their younger days, 'twas 'Jack do this'; — if he demur'd — I knock'd him down — and if he grumbled at that — I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. Mal. Aye, and the properest way, o' my conscience! — nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity. — Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; — and I hope you will represent *her* to the Captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. — Well, I must leave you — and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl; — take my advice — keep a tight hand — if she rejects this proposal — clap her under lock and key; — and if you were just to let the servants forget

325. **in a frenzy**: this phrase, like Lydia's "Heigh-ho!" and Mrs. Malaprop's "don't become a young woman," is a tag in the mouth of Sir Anthony. — **My process**, etc.: Mr. Sichel points out (*Sheridan*, i, 299) that this is a reminiscence from Sheridan and Halhed's unpublished farce *Jupiter*: "No, damme! my process is only this. . . . If she refuses me, I knock her down and take it. And if she don't like that, I drop her acquaintance."

339. **roundly**: vigorously, without mincing matters.

to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about! [*Exit* Sir Anth.

Mrs. Mal. Well, at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. — She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger — Sure Lucy can't have betray'd me! — No, the girl is such a simpleton I should have made her confess it. — Lucy! — Lucy! — [*Calls*] Had she been one of your artificial ones I should never have trusted her.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Did you call, Ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Yes, girl. — Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs. Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mention'd ——

Lucy. O Gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs. Mal. Well, don't let your simplicity be impos'd on.

Lucy. No, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius. — But mind Lucy — if ever you betray what you are entrusted with — (unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my malevolence for ever: — and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality.

[*Exit* Mrs. Malaprop

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! — So, my dear *simplicity*, let me give you a little respite. — [*Altering her manner*] — Let girls in my station be as fond as they

358. **Gemini**: a mild form of oath, possibly corrupted from *Jesu Domine*, possibly referring to the Heavenly Twins, Castor and Pollux.

please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts — commend me to a mask of *silliness*, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it! — Let me see to what account I have turn'd my *simplicity* lately — [*Looks at a paper*] For *abetting* [375 *Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an Ensign! — in money — sundry times — twelve pound twelve — gowns, five — hats, ruffles, caps, &c. &c. — numberless! — From the said Ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a* [380 *half.* — About a quarter's pay! — Item, *from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her* — when I found matters were likely to be discovered — *two guineas, and a black paduasoy.* — Item, *from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters* — which [385 I never deliver'd — *two guineas, and a pair of buckles.* — Item, *from Sir Lucius O'Trigger — three crowns — two gold pocket-pieces — and a silver snuff-box!* — Well done, *simplicity!* — Yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe that he [390 was corresponding, not with the *Aunt*, but with the *Niece:* for, though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

384. **paduasoy** : a garment made of paduasoy, a fashionable silk fabric.

388. **crowns** : a coin worth about $1.20. — **pocket-pieces** : "lucky" coins carried about in the pocket.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Captain* Absolute's *Lodgings.*

Captain Absolute *and* Fag.

Fag. Sir, while I was there Sir Anthony came in: I told him you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished! He started back two or three paces, rapt out a dozen interjectoral oaths, and asked what the devil had brought you here!

Abs. Well, Sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, Sir — I forget the precise lie; but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what *has* brought us to Bath, in order that we may lie a little consistently. — Sir Anthony's servants were curious, Sir, very curious indeed.

Abs. You have said nothing to them ——?

Fag. O, not a word, Sir, — not a word. — Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips) ——

Abs. S'death! — you rascal! you have not trusted him!

Fag. O, *no*, Sir! — no — no — not a syllable, upon my veracity! — He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, Sir — devilish sly! — My Master (said

22. **S'death**: God's death.

I), honest Thomas (you know, Sir, one says *honest* to one's inferiors), is come to Bath to *recruit*. — Yes, Sir — I said, *to recruit* — and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, Sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else. 31

Abs. Well — *recruit* will do — let it be so —

Fag. O, Sir, recruit will do surprisingly. — Indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas that your Honour had already inlisted five disbanded [35 chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary. 39

Fag. I beg pardon, Sir — I beg pardon. — But, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. — Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge *indorsements*, as well as the bill. 44

Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit by offering too much security. — Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, Sir, changing his dress.

Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival? 50

Fag. I fancy not, Sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him at

35–7. **chairmen**: men who carried sedan chairs, or wheeled invalids in Bath-chairs. — **disbanded**: out of employment. — **minority waiters**: "meaning obscure; by some explained as 'a waiter out of work,' by others as 'an extra-ordinary tide-waiter,' i. e. one not regularly employed." (*N. E. D.*) Here, in all probability, is meant "waiters out of work." — **billiard-markers**: Fag cites billiards as one of the regular amusements of the day (i, 1, 87).

Bristol. — I think, Sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down.

Abs. Go tell him I am here.

Fag. Yes, Sir. — [*Going*] I beg pardon, Sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember that we are *recruiting*, if you please.

Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your Honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I shall esteem it as an obligation; — for though I never scruple a lie to serve my Master, yet it *hurts* one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Abs. Now for my whimsical friend. — If he does not know that his mistress is here, I 'll tease him a little before I tell him ——

Enter Faulkland.

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again; you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abs. Faith, much as they were. I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abs. What, and lose two thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend. — No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay then, you trifle too long. — If you are sure of *her*, propose to the aunt *in your own character*, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Abs. Softly, softly, for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side. No, no, I must prepare [90 her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it. — Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the Hotel?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot. I am not in spirits to be of such a party. 95

Abs. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover! — Do love like a man!

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company. 99

Abs. Am not *I* a lover; aye, and a romantic one too? Yet do I carry every where with me such a confounded farago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country Miss's brain?

Faulk. Ah! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. [105 — You throw for a large stake, but losing — you could stake, and throw again: — but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed were to be stript of all. 109

Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present? Has Julia miss'd writing this last post? or was her last too tender, or too cool; or too grave, or too gay; or ——

89. **reversion**: a legal term, "the right of succeeding to, or next occupying, an estate."

102. **farago**: hotchpotch, confused mixture.

Faulk. Nay, nay, Jack.

Abs. Why, her love — her honour — her prudence, you cannot doubt.

Faulk. O! upon my soul, I never have. — But what grounds for apprehension did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand! I fear for her spirits — her health — her life. — My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her health — does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! — If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O! Jack, when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Abs. Aye, but we may choose whether we will take the hint or no. — Well then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia was well and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure — I'm anxious only for that.

Abs. Then to cure your anxiety at once — Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath!

Faulk. Nay, Jack — don't trifle with me.

Abs. She is arrived here with my father within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than

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to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind. — Seriously then, it is as I tell you — upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend! — Hollo, Du-Peigne! [150 my hat. — My dear Jack — *now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.*

Enter Fag.

Fag. Sir, Mr. Acres just arrived is below.

Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your [155 mistress has been ever since you left her. — Fag, show the gentleman up. [*Exit* Fag.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Abs. O, very intimate. I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you. 160

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abs. He is likewise a rival of mine — that is of my *other self's*, for he does not think his friend Capt. Absolute ever saw the lady in question; — and [165 it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of *one Beverley*, a concealed sculking rival, who ——

Faulk. Hush! — He's here.

Enter Acres.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how do'st thou? Just arrived, faith, [170 as you see. — Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack! — Odds, whips and wheels! I've travelled like a Comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall. 174

Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an excentric Planet; but we know your attraction hither. — Give me leave

174. **the Mall**: the fashionable promenade in St. James's Park, London.

to introduce Mr. Faulkland to you. Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you: Sir, I solicit your connections. — Hey Jack, — what, — this is Mr. Faulkland, who ——?

Abs. Aye, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr. Faulkland.

Acres. Od'so! she and your father can be but just arrived before me: — I suppose you have seen them. —— Ah! Mr. Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, Sir. — I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, Sir, — never better. — Odd's Blushes and Blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed! — I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, Sir — only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick.

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me: — yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love. — Now confess — isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

192. **German Spa**: The oldest, and formerly one of the best known of the large European watering-places; just across the German border, in the province of Liège, Belgium.

Abs. O, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well Sir, but you were saying that Miss Melville has been so *exceedingly* well — what, [210 then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose? — Always in spirits — hey?

Acres. Merry! Odds crickets! she has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been — so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour! 216

Faulk. There, Jack, there! — O, by my soul! there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome. — What! happy and I away! 219

Abs. Have done. How foolish this is! Just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's *spirits.*

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Abs. No, indeed, you have not. 225

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Abs. O, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Abs. No, faith; to do you justice, you have been confounded stupid indeed. 230

Acres. What 's the matter with the gentleman?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy — that's all — hey, Faulkland? 234

Faulk. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it — yes, yes, she has a *happy* disposition!

213. **crickets**: a mild form of oath, suggested to Acres by the phrase "as merry as a cricket."

Acres. That she has indeed. — Then she is so accomplished — so sweet a voice — so expert at her Harpsichord — such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante! — there was [240 this time month. — Odds Minnums and Crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs. Piano's Concert!

Faulk. There again, what say you to this? You see she has been all mirth and song — not a thought of me! 245

Abs. Pho! man, is not music the food of love?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so. — Pray, Mr. —— what 's his d—d name? — Do you remember what Songs Miss Melville sung?

Acres. Not I, indeed. 250

Abs. Stay now, they were some pretty, melancholy, purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect; — did she sing — "*When absent from my soul's delight*"?

Acres. No, that wa'n't it. 255

Abs. Or — "*Go, gentle Gales*"? —— "*Go, gentle Gales!*" [*Sings.*]

Acres. O no! nothing like it. — Odds slips! now

239. **squallante, rumblante, quiverante**: words humorously coined as musical terms after *andante*.

241. **Minnums and Crotchets**: terms in music applied to notes of certain values.

246. **music the food of love**: *Twelfth Night*, I, i, 1: "If music be the food of love."

256. **Go, gentle Gales**: Professor Nettleton points out that this is the refrain of the song, *The faithful lover*, given in *Clio and Euterpe, or British Harmony* (1762), vol. iii, p. 1: —

Go, gentle gales,
Go, bear my sighs away,
And to my love,
The tender notes convey.

I recollect one of them — "*My heart's my own, my will is free.*" [*Sings.*]

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! S'death! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to sooth her light heart with catches and glees! — What can you say to this, Sir?

Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, *Sir.*

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay — I am not sorry that she has been happy — no, no, I am glad of that — I would not have had her sad or sick — yet surely [a sympathetic heart would have shewn itself even in the choice of a song — she might have been temperately healthy, and, somehow, plaintively gay; — but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Aye, truly, does she. — There was at our last race-ball ——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there! — I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence! — Dancing! — but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine! — I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary — my days have been [hours of care, my nights of watchfulness. — She has

259. **My heart's my own**, etc.: from *Love in a Village*, a comic opera by Isaac Bickerstaffe. (Nettleton.)

264. **catches and glees**: musical compositions for three or more voices, and generally of a sprightly nature.

280. **race-ball**: a ball held on the occasion of a race meeting, hence very lively in nature.

been all Health! Spirit! Laugh! Song! Dance! — Oh! d—n'd, d—n'd levity!

Abs. For Heaven's sake! Faulkland, don't expose yourself so. — Suppose she has danced, what [290 then? — Does not the ceremony of society often oblige ——

Faulk. Well, well, I 'll contain myself. — Perhaps, as you say — for form sake. — What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a *minuet* — hey? 296

Acres. Oh I dare insure her for that — but what I was going to speak of was her *country dancing:* — Odds swimmings! she has such an air with her! —

Faulk. Now disappointment on her! — De- [300 fend this, Absolute, why don't you defend this? — Country-dances! jiggs, and reels! Am I to blame now? A Minuet I could have forgiven — I should not have minded that — I say I should not have regarded a Minuet — but *Country-dances!* Z——ds! had [305 she made one in a *Cotillon* — I believe I could have forgiven even that — but to be monkey-led for a night! — to run the gauntlet thro' a string of amorous palming puppies! — to show paces like a managed filly! — O Jack, there never can be but [310 *one* man in the world whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a *Country-dance;* and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts! 314

296. **minuet**: a dance conspicuous for its slow and stately measures.

299. **swimmings**: dizziness, a "referential" oath, suggested by "Country-dances! jiggs, and reels!"

309. **managed**: (of a horse) trained in his paces.

Abs. Aye, to be sure! — grand-fathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the Set, 'twill spread like a contagion — the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jigg — their quivering, warm-breath'd sighs impregnate [320 the very air — the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts thro' every link of the chain! — I must leave you — I own I am somewhat flurried — and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going.* [325

Abs. Aye, aye, you are in a hurry to throw yourself at Julia's feet.

Faulk. I'm not in a humour to be trifled with. — I shall see her only to upbraid her. [*Going.*

Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news. 331

Faulk. D—n his news! [*Exit* Faulkland.

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! Poor Faulkland! Five minutes since — "nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!" 335

Acres. The gentleman wa'n't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me? — that's a good joke. 340

Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob: let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of your's will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke — ha! ha! — mischief — ha! ha! But you know I am not my own property; [345 my dear Lydia has forestalled me. — She could never

324. **looby**: a stupid, clownish person.

abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly — but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here — now ancient Madam has no voice in it. — I'll make my old clothes know who's [350 master. — I shall straitway cashier the hunting-frock — and render my leather breeches incapable. — My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed! 354

Acres. Aye — and tho'ff the side-curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes to it very kindly.

Abs. O, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so. — Then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't. 360

Abs. Spoke like a man. — But pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing ——

Acres. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it? — 'Tis genteel, isn't it? — I didn't invent it myself, [365 though; but a commander in our militia — a great scholar, I assure you — says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; — because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, [370 but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment: — so that to swear with propriety, says my little Ma-

348. **frogs**: ornamental fastenings used on military coats. — **tambours**: fancy embroideries.

352–356. **My hair**, etc.: "Here *Acres* removes his cap, and shows his side-curls in papers. After his next speech, he turns his back to the audience to show his back-hair elaborately dressed." (Brander Matthews.)

355. **tho'ff**: though.

jor, the "oath should be an echo to the sense"; and this we call the *oath referential*, or *sentimental swearing* — ha! ha! ha! 'Tis genteel, isn't it? 376

Abs. Very genteel, and very new, indeed — and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Aye, aye, the best terms will grow obsolete. —— D—ns have had their day. 381

Enter Fag.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you. — Shall I show him into the parlour?

Abs. Aye — you may.

Acres. Well, I must be gone —— 385

Abs. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, Sir.

Abs. You puppy, why didn't you shew him up directly? [*Exit* Fag. [389

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony. — I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop at my lodgings. — I have sent also to my dear friend, Sir Lucius O'Trigger. — Adieu, Jack! We must meet at night. — Odds bottles and glasses! you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia. 395

Abs. That I will, with all my heart. [*Exit* Acres.

Abs. Now for a parental lecture. — I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here. — I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul! 400

Enter Sir Anthony.

Abs. Sir, I am delighted to see you here, and look-

374. **the oath should be an echo to the sense**: an obvious parody of a line in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*: "The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

ing so well! — Your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack. — What, you are recruiting here, hey? 405

Abs. Yes, Sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, tho' I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business. — Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long. 411

Abs. Pardon me, Sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may continue so. 414

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time. — Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit. 421

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my Boy make some figure in the world. — I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence. 426

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me. — Such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection. 429

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention — and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, Sir, speak my gratitude: I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.

—— Yet, Sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army? 436

Sir Anth. O, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, Sir!

Sir Anth. Aye, aye, — settle that between you — settle that between you. 440

Abs. A *wife*, Sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Aye, a wife — why, did not I mention her before? 444

Abs. Not a word of it, Sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so! — I mus'n't forget *her*, tho'. — Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage — the fortune is saddled with a wife. — But I suppose that makes no difference. 449

Abs. Sir! Sir! — you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the d——l's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, Sir. — You talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why — what difference does that make? Odds life, Sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands. 456

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase. — Pray, Sir, who is the lady? 459

Sir Anth. What's that to you, Sir? — Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

455–456. **if . . . stands**: A reminiscence of Foote's *Maid of Bath*, of which Miss Linley, Sheridan's wife, was the heroine. Mrs. Linnet (= Mrs. Linley) says to her daughter, who objects to marrying a wealthy suitor with ten thousand pounds a year (ii, 1): "Would you refuse an estate, because it happen'd to be a little encumber'd? you must consider the man in this case as a kind of mortgage."

Abs. Sure, Sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, Sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to *object* to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, Sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fix'd on another.

Sir Anth. They are, are they? Well, that's lucky — because you will have more merit in your obedience to me.

Abs. Sir, my heart is engaged to an Angel.

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse. —— It is very sorry — but *business* prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming: besides, you have the Angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, Sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack; — I have heard you for some time with patience — I have been cool — quite cool; — but take care — you know I am compliance itself — when I am not thwarted; — no one more easily led — when I have my own way; — but don't put me in a frenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it — in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now, d—n me! if ever I call you *Jack* again while I live!

Abs. Nay, Sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word — not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod —

and I'll tell you what, Jack — I mean, you Dog — if you don't, by ——— 496

Abs. What, Sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to ——

Sir Anth. Z——ds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each [500 shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the Crescent; her one eye shall roll like the Bull's in Coxe's museum — she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew — she shall be all this, sirrah! — yet I 'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty. 506

Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Abs. Indeed, Sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life. 511

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, Sir! I know you are laughing in your sleeve: I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better. 515

Sir Anth. None of your passion, Sir! none of your violence! if you please. — It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, Sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie! — I know [520 you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! But it won't do.

Abs. Nay, Sir, upon my word.

502. **the Bull's in Coxe's museum**: Mr. James Cox, a jeweler of London, exhibited various mechanical curiosities in Bath in 1773–4. Among these was "The Curious Bull."

509. **jackanapes**: monkey.

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! Can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can *Passion* do! [525 — *Passion* is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing Reprobate! — There you sneer again! — don't provoke me! — But you rely upon the mildness of my temper — you do, you Dog! you play upon the weakness of my disposition! Yet take care [530 — the patience of a saint may be overcome at last! — but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I choose, why — confound you! I may in time forgive you —— [535 If not, z——ds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trust- [540 ees, and you shall live on the interest. — I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and — d—n me, if ever I call you Jack again! [*Exit* Sir Anthony.

Absolute, *solus.*

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father — I kiss your hands. — What a tender method of giving his [545 opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has! I dare not trust him with the truth. — I wonder what old wealthy Hag it is that he wants to bestow on me! — Yet he married himself for love! and was in his youth a bold Intriguer, and a gay Companion! 550

Enter Fag.

Fag. Assuredly, Sir, our Father is wrath to a degree. He comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time — muttering, growling, and thumping the bannisters all the way: I, and the Cook's dog, stand bow-

ing at the door — rap! he gives me a stroke on [555
the head with his cane; bids me carry that to my master; then kicking the poor Turnspit into the area, d—ns us all for a puppy triumvirate! — Upon my credit, Sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance. [561

Abs. Cease your impertinence, Sir, at present. — Did you come in for nothing more? — Stand out of the way! [*Pushes him aside, and exit.*] 564

Fag, *solus.*

Fag. Soh! Sir Anthony trims my Master. He is afraid to reply to his Father — then vents his spleen on poor Fag! — When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another who happens to come in the way — is the vilest injustice! Ah! it shows the worst temper — the basest —— 570

Enter Errand-Boy.

Boy. Mr. Fag! Mr. Fag! your Master calls you.

Fag. Well, you little, dirty puppy, you need not baul so! — The meanest disposition! the ——

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr. Fag! 574

Fag. *Quick, quick*, you impudent Jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you too? you little, impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred ——

[*Exit, kicking and beating him.*

Scene II. *The* North Parade.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. So — I shall have another Rival to add to my mistress's list — Captain Absolute. —— However,

557. **Turnspit**: a kind of small dog, so named because formerly he was made to turn the spit on which meat was roasting.

I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed! — Well, I have done him a last friendly office in letting him know that Beverley was here before him. — Sir Lucius is generally more punctual when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia*, as he calls her: — I wonder he's not here! — I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; tho' I should not be paid so well. if my hero knew that *Delia* was near fifty, and her own mistress. — I could not have thought he would have been so nice, when there's a golden egg in the case, as to care whether he has it from a pullet or an old hen!

Enter Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Sir Luc. Hah! my little embassadress — upon my conscience, I have been looking for you. I have been on the South Parade this half-hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

Sir Luc. Faith! — may be that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical, too, how you could go out and I not see you — for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the *window* on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a six-pence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so — and I never dreamt it was so late, till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

3. **till my purse has received notice in form**: until I have received my bribe.

8. **Dalia**: the Irish pronunciation; cf. "tey," "tay."

Lucy. Yes, but I have: — I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. O faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed. — Well — let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a letter.*

Sir Luc. [*Reads*] "*Sir — there is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of* [*Sir Lucius O'Trigger.*" — Very pretty, upon my word. — "*As my motive is interested, you may be assured my love shall never be miscellaneous.*" Very well. "*Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet let me add, that it will give me joy infallible* [*to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections. — Yours, while meretricious.* — DELIA." Upon my conscience! Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language. — Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary! — for the devil a word dare refuse [coming at her call — tho' one would think it was quite out of hearing.

Lucy. Aye, Sir, a lady of her experience ——

Sir Luc. Experience! what, at seventeen?

Lucy. O true, Sir — but then she reads so — my stars! how she will read off-hand!

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way — tho' she is rather an arbitrary writer

44. **punctuation**: cf. Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, iii, 13, p. 313): "Do you think Miss Tryfort doesn't understand punctuality better than to go into corners with young fellows?"

45. **infallible**: Mrs. Tryfort (*A Journey to Bath*, ii, 2, p. 299): "Oh, I'll infallibly go."

too — for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their [60 *habeas corpus* from any court in Christendom. —— However, when affection guides the pen, Lucy, he must be a brute who finds fault with the style.

Lucy. Ah! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you! 65

Sir Luc. O tell her I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain! — But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent — and do everything fairly. 69

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'n't rich enough to be so nice!

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it: — I am so poor that I can't afford to do a dirty action. — If I did not want money I'd steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of [75 pleasure. — However, my pretty girl [*Gives her money*], here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss before-hand to put you in mind. [*Kisses her.* [80

Lucy. O lud! Sir Lucius — I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith she will, Lucy —— That same —— pho! what's the name of it? — *Modesty!* —— is a [85

60–61. **get their habeas corpus** : i. e. freedom. The writ of Habeas Corpus is an order requiring the immediate production of a person in court for the purpose of inquiring into the legality of his detention.

85. **what's the name of it?** "All the most laboured portraits of Hibernian assurance, do not perhaps amount to so humourous an instance as Sir Lucius O'Trigger's forgetting the very name

quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her *fifty* — my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie? [89

Sir Luc. Ah, then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently. [*Kisses her.*

Lucy. For shame now; here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. O faith, I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Sees* Fag. — *Exit, humming a Tune.*

Enter Fag.

Fag. So, so, Ma'am. I humbly beg pardon. 94

Lucy. O lud! — now, Mr. Fag — you flurry one so.

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one bye — so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please. —— You play false with us, Madam. — I saw you give the Baronet a letter. — My Master shall know this — and if he don't call him out — I will. 101

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty. — That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton. — She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. What tastes some people have! — Why, [105 I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times. —— But what says our young lady? Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr. Fag! — A worse Rival than Acres! — Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute? 111

Lucy. Even so. — I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! — very good, faith. — Good-bye, Lucy, I must away with this news. 114

of modesty." — From a letter in *The Morning Chronicle*, Feb. 2, 1775.

Lucy. Well, — you may laugh — but it is true, I assure you. [*Going*] But — Mr. Fag — tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. O he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear! — never fear!

Lucy. Be sure — bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will — we will. [*Exeunt severally.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The* North Parade.

Enter Absolute.

Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. — Whimsical enough, faith! My Father wants to *force* me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! — He must not know of my connection with her yet a-while. — He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters — and Lydia shall not yet lose her hopes of an elopement. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. — My conversion is something sudden, indeed — but I can assure him it is very *sincere.* —— So, so — here he comes. — He looks plaguy gruff. [*Steps aside.*

Enter Sir Anthony.

Sir Anth. No — I'll die sooner than forgive him. — *Die*, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. — At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. — An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! — Who can he take after? This is my

return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! — for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, beside his pay ever since! — But I have done with him; — he's any body's son for me. — I never will see him more, — never — never — never — never!

Abs. Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way.

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent. — I am come, Sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, Sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, Puppy?

Abs. Why then, Sir, the result of my reflections is — a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why now you talk sense — absolute sense — I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. —— Confound you, you shall be *Jack* again!

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you — who the lady really is. — Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, pre-

vented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for [50
wonder and rapture! — prepare! —— What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! No. Did you never [55
meet Mrs. Malaprop and her Niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay — I [60
think I do recollect something. —— *Languish! Languish!* She squints, don't she? — A little, red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints? — A red-haired girl! — Z——ds, no! 65

Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen? 69

Abs. As to that, Sir, I am quite indifferent. — If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply [75
blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! — O Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting, more lovely in sullenness! 79

Abs. [*Aside*] That 's she, indeed. — Well done, old gentleman!

Sir Anth. Then, Jack, her neck! — O Jack! Jack!

Abs. And which is to be mine, Sir, the Niece or the Aunt? 84

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible Puppy, I despise you! When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The *Aunt*, indeed! — Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire. 90

Abs. Not to please your father, Sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father! —— Z—ds! not to please —— O, my father! — Oddso! — yes — yes! if my father, indeed, had desired — that's quite another matter. — Tho' he wa'n't the indulgent father that I am, Jack. 96

Abs. I dare say not, Sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful? 99

Abs. Sir, I repeat it; if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, Sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind. — Now, without being very nice, I own I should [105 rather chuse a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and tho' *one* eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of *two*, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article. 110

107–9. Charles Dickens seems to have been familiar with *The Rivals*. An echo of this phrase occurs in *Nicholas Nickleby* (ch. iv): "He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two." Cf. also iii, 3, 25: "He is the very Pine-apple of politeness," with *Nicholas Nickleby* (ch. xxxiv) in which Mr.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite! — a vile, insensible stock. — You a soldier! — you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! — Odds life! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, Sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the *Aunt;* or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady — 'tis the same to me — I'll marry the *Niece.*

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or —— but come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie — I'm sure it must — come, now — d—n your demure face! — come, confess, Jack — you have been lying — [125 ha'n't you? You have been lying, hey? I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't: — so now, own, my dear Jack, you have been playing the hypocrite, hey? — I'll never forgive you if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, Sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly.

Abs. Where does she lodge, Sir?

Mantalini refers to his wife as "my essential juice of pine-apple." Mrs. Nickleby's references to her husband show reminiscences of Mrs. Malaprop.

112. **anchorite**: recluse, hermit.

113. **block**: a term applied to a stupid, unfeeling person: cf. "blockhead."

Sir Anth. What a dull question! — Only on the Grove here.

Abs. O! then I can call on her in my way to the coffee-house.

Sir Anth. In your way to the coffee-house! You'll set your heart down in your way to the coffee-house, hey? Ah! you leaden-nerv'd, wooden-hearted dolt! But come along, you shall see her directly; her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you — come along. I'll never forgive you if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience. — If you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Julia's *Dressing-room.*

Faulkland, *solus.*

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; wonder she is not yet come! — How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point: — but on this one subject, and to this one object, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful, and madly capricious! — I am conscious of it — yet I cannot correct myself! What tender, honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! — How delicate was the warmth of her expressions! — I was ashamed to appear less happy — though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations; — yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so *very* happy in my absence. —

138. **Grove**: a fashionable square planted with trees, and surrounded by handsome houses, not far from the Pump Room and the Parades. It was named "Orange Grove" from the visit of the Prince of Orange. See the map.

She is coming! — Yes! — I know the nimbleness of her tread when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter Julia.

Jul. I had not hop'd to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome — restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

Jul. O Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered more coolness in your first salutation than my long-hoarded joy could have presaged.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. — I *was* rejoiced to see you — to see you in such health. — Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Jul. Nay then, I see you have taken something ill. — You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well then — shall I own to you? — but you will despise me, Julia — nay, I despise myself for it. —— Yet I *will* own, that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was something damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire — on your mirth — your singing — dancing, and I know not what! — For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy. — The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Jul. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing minute caprice? — Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: no, no — I am happy if you have been so — yet only say that you did not sing with *mirth* — say that you *thought* of Faulkland in the dance.

Jul. I never can be happy in your absence. — If I wear a countenance of content, it is to shew that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. —— If I seem'd sad — it were to make malice triumph, and say that I had fixed my heart on one who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. — Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you when I say that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me. — O, I am a brute when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Jul. If ever, without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude.

Faulk. Ah! Julia, that *last* word is grating to me. I would I had no title to your *gratitude!* Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for Love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Jul. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding were only to *esteem* me. And for person — I have often wish'd myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation *there* for any part of your affection.

Jul. Where Nature has bestowed a shew of nice

attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men who in *this* vain article perhaps might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now this is not well from *you*, Julia. — I despise person in a man. — Yet if you lov'd me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Jul. I see you are determined to be unkind. — The *contract* which my poor father bound us in gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. — I would not have been more free — no — I am proud of my restraint. —— Yet — yet — perhaps your high respect alone for this [95 solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which else had made worthier choice. — How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Jul. Then try me now. — Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: — *my* heart will not feel more liberty!

Faulk. There now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! — If your love for me were fixed and [105 ardent, you would not loose your hold, even tho' I wish'd it!

Jul. O, you torture me to the heart! — I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you. — If I lov'd you less I should never give you an uneasy moment. — But hear me. — All my fretful doubts arise from this — Women are not used to weigh, and separate

the motives of their affections: — the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. —— I would not boast — yet let me say that I have neither age, person, or character to found dislike on; — my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with *indiscretion* in the match. — O Julia! when *Love* receives such countenance from *Prudence*, nice minds will be suspicious of its *birth*.

Jul. I know not whither your insinuations would tend: — as they seem pressing to insult me — I will spare you the regret of having done so. — I have given you no cause for this! [*Exit in tears.*

Faulk. In Tears! Stay, Julia: stay but for a moment. —— The door is fastened! — Julia! — my soul — but for one moment. — I hear her sobbing! — 'Sdeath! what a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay! — Aye — she is coming now. — How little resolution there is in woman! — How a few soft words can turn them! —— No, faith! — she is *not* coming either! —— Why, Julia — my love — say but that you forgive me — come but to tell me that. — Now, this is being *too* resentful. — Stay! she *is* coming too — I thought she would — no *steadiness* in any thing! her going away must have been a mere trick then. — She sha'n't see that I was hurt by it. — I'll affect indifference. — [*Hums a tune: then listens*] —— No — Z—ds! she's *not* coming! — nor don't intend it, I suppose. — This is not *steadiness*, but *obstinacy!* Yet I deserve it. — What, after so long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness! — 'twas barbarous and unmanly! — I should be ashamed to see her now. — I'll wait till her just resentment is abated —

and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose knawing passions, and long-hoarded spleen shall make me curse my folly half the day, and all the night! [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *Mrs.* Malaprop's *Lodgings.*

Mrs. Malaprop, *and Captain* Absolute.

Mrs. Mal. Your being Sir Anthony's son, Captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; — but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, Madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour! — I beg, Captain, you'll be seated. — [*Sit*] — Ah! few gentlemen now a days know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! — few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower, beauty!

Abs. It is but too true, indeed, Ma'am. — Yet I fear our ladies should share the blame — they think our admiration of *beauty* so great, that *knowledge* in *them* would be superfluous. Thus, like garden-trees, they [20 seldom shew fruits till time has robb'd them of the more specious blossom. — Few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the Orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs. Mal. Sir — you overpower me with good

148. **virago**: a termagant; a shrewish, turbulent woman.

breeding. — He is the very Pine-apple of polite- [25
ness! — You are not ignorant, Captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eaves-dropping Ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of. 29

Abs. O, I have heard the silly affair before. — I 'm not at all prejudiced against her on *that* account.

Mrs. Mal. You are very good, and very considerate, Captain. — I am sure I have done every thing in my power since I exploded the affair! Long ago I laid my positive conjunction on her never to think [35 on the fellow again; — I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition before her; — but, I 'm sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her. 39

Abs. It must be very distressing, indeed, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. It gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree! — I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but behold this very day I have intercepted another letter from the fellow! I believe I have it in my pocket. 45

Abs. O the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Aye, here it is.

Abs. Aye, my note, indeed! O the little traitress Lucy. [*Aside.* [49

Mrs. Mal. There, perhaps you may know the writing. [*Gives him the letter.*

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before. — Yes, I *certainly must* have seen this hand before: ——

45. "Tradition authorizes Mrs. Malaprop first to take from her pocket the letter of Sir Lucius, and then discovering her mistake, to produce with much difficulty and in great confusion, the letter which Capt. Absolute recognizes at once." (Brander Matthews.)

Mrs. Mal. Nay, but read it, Captain.

Abs. [*Reads*] "*My soul's idol, my ador'd Lydia!*" — Very tender, indeed!

Mrs. Mal. Tender! aye, and prophane, too, o' my conscience!

Abs. "*I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival*"——

Mrs. Mal. That's *you*, Sir.

Abs. "*has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour.*" —— Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs. Mal. O, the fellow had some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. But go on, Sir — you'll see presently.

Abs. "*As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you*" — Who can he mean by that?

Mrs. Mal. *Me!* Sir — *me!* — he means *me!* There — what do you think now? — But go on a little further.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel! — "*it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand*" ——

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir! an attack upon my language! What do you think of that? — an aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hang'd and quartered! Let me see — "*same ridiculous vanity*" —

Mrs. Mal. You need not read it again, Sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, Ma'am —— "*does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*" — an impudent coxcomb! [90 —— "*so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old Harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interviews.*" — Was ever such assurance! [94

Mrs. Mal. Did you ever hear any thing like it? — He'll elude my vigilance, will he? — Yes, yes! ha! ha! He's very likely to enter these doors! — We'll try who can plot best!

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! A conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha! —— Well, but Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems [100 so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time — let her even plot an elopement with him — then do you connive at her escape — while *I*, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead. 106

Mrs. Mal. I am delighted with the scheme; never was any thing better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now? — I should like to try her temper a little. 111

Mrs. Mal. Why, I don't know — I doubt she is not prepared for a first visit of this kind. — There is a decorum in these matters. 114

Abs. O Lord! she won't mind *me* — only tell her Beverley ——

Mrs. Mal. Sir! ——

92. **Harridan**: a hag; a gaunt, ill-favoured old woman.
112. **doubt**: suspect.

Abs. [*Aside*] Gently, good tongue.

Mrs. Mal. What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. O, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below —she'd come down fast enough then — ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves. — Besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her — ha! ha! — Let him if he can, I say again. — Lydia, come down here! [*Calling*] — He 'll make me a *go-between in their interviews!* — ha! ha! ha! — Come down, I say, Lydia! — I don't wonder at your laughing, ha! ha! ha! — his impudence is truly ridiculous.

Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, Ma'am, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Mal. The little hussy won't hear. — Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is. — She shall know that Capt. Absolute is come to wait on her. — And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. As you please, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. For the present, Captain, your servant. — Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see — *elude my vigilance!* — yes, yes, ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! one would think now I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security— but such is Lydia's caprice that to undeceive were probably to lose her.— I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

Enter Lydia.

Lyd. What a scene am I now to go thro'! Surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's

heart. — I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured [150 lover to the generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it — there stands the hated rival — an officer too! — but O, how unlike my Beverley! — I wonder he don't begin — Truly he seems a very negligent wooer! — Quite at his ease, upon my word! — I'll speak first [*Aloud*] —— Mr. Absolute. 156

Abs. Madam. [*Turns round.*

Lyd. O heav'ns! Beverley!

Abs. Hush! — hush, my life! — Softly! Be not surprised! 160

Lyd. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoy'd! — For Heav'n's sake! how came you here?

Abs. Briefly — I have deceived your Aunt. — I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on *her* for Capt. Absolute. 166

Lyd. O, charming! — And she really takes you for young Absolute?

Abs. O, she's convinced of it.

Lyd. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is over-reached! 171

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments — such another opportunity may not occur — then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from unde- [175 served persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

Lyd. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth? — that burthen on the wings of love? 180

Abs. O, come to me — rich only thus — in loveli-

ness. — Bring no portion to me but thy love — 'twill be generous in you, Lydia — for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lyd. How persuasive are his words! — how charming will poverty be with him!

Abs. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! We will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there. — Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. — By Heav'ns! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me — but here. [*Embracing her*] —— If she holds out now the devil is in it! [*Aside.*

Lyd. Now could I fly with him to the Antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

Enter Mrs. Malaprop, *listening.*

Mrs. Mal. I'm impatient to know how the little huzzy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Abs. So pensive, Lydia! — is then your warmth abated?

Mrs. Mal. Warmth abated! — So! — she has been in a passion, I suppose. [*Aside.*

Lyd. No — nor never can while I have life.

Mrs. Mal. An ill-temper'd little devil! — She'll be *in a passion all her life* — will she? [*Aside.*

200. **to the Antipodes**: to the ends of the world; literally, points on the globe directly opposite each other.

Lyd. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs. Mal. Very dutiful, upon my word! [*Aside.*

Lyd. Let her choice be *Capt. Absolute*, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. Mal. I am astonished at her assurance! — *to his face — this to his face!* [*Aside.*

Abs. Thus then let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs. Mal. [*Aside*] Aye — poor young man! — down on his knees entreating for pity! — I can contain no longer. — [*Aloud*] Why, huzzy! huzzy! — I have overheard you.

Abs. O confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Capt. Absolute — I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. So — all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*
I have hopes, Madam, that time will bring the young lady ——

Mrs. Mal. O there's nothing to be hoped for from her! She's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lyd. Nay, Madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel — didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better? — didn't you say you never would be his?

Lyd. No, Madam — I did not.

Mrs. Mal. Good Heav'ns! what assurance! — Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman! — Didn't you boast that Beverley — that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart? — Tell me that, I say.

242. **stroller** : vagabond, adventurer.

Lyd. 'Tis true, Ma'am, and none but Beverley ——

Mrs. Mal. Hold — hold, Assurance! — you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay, pray Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: — she's very welcome to talk thus — it does not hurt *me* in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. Mal. You are *too* good, Captain — *too* amiably patient — but come with me, Miss. — Let us see you again soon, Captain. — Remember what we have fixed.

Abs. I shall, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lyd. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my lov'd Bev ———

Mrs. Mal. Huzzy! I'll choak the word in your throat! — come along — come along.

[*Exeunt severally*, Beverley *kissing his hand to* Lydia — ***Mrs.*** Malaprop *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV. Acres's *Lodgings.*

Acres *and* David.

Acres *as just dress'd.*

Acres. Indeed, David — do you think I become it so?

Dav. You are quite another creature, believe me, Master, by the Mass! an' we've any luck we shall see the Devon monkeyrony in all the print-shops in Bath!

5. **monkeyrony**: David's way of pronouncing "macaroni," a dandy.

Acres. Dress *does* make a difference, David.

Dav. 'Tis all in all, I think. — Difference! why, an you were to go now to Clod-Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you, Master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, "Lard presarve me!" our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your Honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat. — Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there a'n't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether *Phillis* would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Aye, David, there's nothing like *polishing.*

Dav. So I says of your Honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr. De-la-Grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

Dav. I'll call again, Sir.

Acres. Do — and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

Dav. I will. — By the Mass, I can't help looking at your head! — If I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

Acres *comes forward practising a dancing step.*

Acres. Sink, slide — coupee! — Confound the first inventors of cotillons! say I — they are as bad as

8. an': if.

9. **Clod-Hall**: In *A Journey to Bath* Sir Jeremy lives at Bull-hall.

15. **Oons**: contracted from "God's wounds."

22. **balancing, chasing, boring**: steps in dancing.

29. **coupee**: "A dance step formerly much used; the dancer rests on one foot and passes the other forward or backward, making a sort of salutation." — *N. E. D.*

algebra to us country gentlemen. — I can walk a Minuet easy enough when I'm forced! — and I have been accounted a good stick in a Country-dance. — Odds jigs and tabors! — I never valued your cross-over two couple — figure in — right and left — and I'd foot it [35 with e'er a captain in the county! — But these outlandish heathen Allemandes and Cotillons are quite beyond me! — I shall never prosper at 'em, that's sure. — Mine are true-born English legs — they don't understand their curst French lingo! — their *Pas* this, and [40 *Pas* that, and *Pas* t'other! — D—n me! my feet don't like to be called Paws! No, 'tis certain I have most Antigallican Toes!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, Sir. 45

Acres. Shew him in.

Enter Sir Lucius.

Sir Luc. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath? 50

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-Lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last. — In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lucius. — I don't choose to mention names, but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman. 55

Sir Luc. Pray, what is the case? — I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady — her friends take my part — I follow her to Bath — send word of my arrival,

37. **Allemandes**: a word applied to various German dances

and receive answer that the lady is to be otherwise [60
disposed of. — This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience. — Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter: she has another lover, *one* Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath. [65
— Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there? — And you think he has supplanted you unfairly? 69

Acres. *Unfairly!* — to be sure he has. — He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here, but you understand me. 75

Acres. What! fight him?

Sir Luc. Aye, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. — Can a man commit [80
a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman? O, by my soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship!

Acres. Breach of *friendship!* Aye, aye; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life. 86

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all. — He has the less right then to take such a liberty.

74. **We wear no swords here**: The Bath regulations against duelling were very strict. No swords were allowed to be worn. Cf. v, 2, 1–2: "A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad-dog."

Acres. 'Gad, that's true. — I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius! — I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! [90 I find a man may have a deal of valour in him and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir Luc. What the d—l signifies *right* when your *honour* is concerned? Do you think *Achilles*, or [95 my little *Alexander the Great* ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broadswords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it. 99

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! — I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising, as it were — a kind of courage, as I may say. —— Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly. 104

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend! if we had *Blunderbuss-Hall* here — I could shew you a range of ancestry in the O'Trigger line that would furnish the new room, every one of whom had killed his man! — For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipt through my fingers, I thank God our honour, and the family-pictures, are as fresh as ever. 111

Acres. O Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too! every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia! — Odds balls and barrels! say no more — I 'm brac'd for it — my nerves are become catgut! my sinews [115 wire! and my heart Pinchbeck! The thunder of your

107. **new room**: the New Assembly Rooms (usually called the "New Rooms" or the "Upper Rooms") were opened in 1771. See i, 1, 78, note.

108–111. Taken almost without change from *A Journey to Bath*: see the *Introduction* p. xxi.

116. **Pinchbeck**: an alloy of copper and zinc resembling

words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast! —— Z—ds! as the man in the play says, "I could do such deeds!"

Sir Luc. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case. — These things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius. — I must be in a rage. — Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me. — Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*

I would the ink were red! — Indite, I say, indite! — How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I 'll write a good *bold hand*, however.

Sir Luc. Pray compose yourself.

Acres. Come — now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! do the thing *decently* and like a Christian. Begin now, — "*Sir*" ——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. "*To prevent the confusion that might arise*" —

Acres. [*Writing*] Well ——

Sir Luc. "*From our both addressing the same lady*" —

Acres. Aye — there's the reason — [*Writing*] "*same lady*" — Well ——

Sir Luc. "*I shall expect the honour of your company*" ——

Acres. Z——ds! I'm not asking him to dinner.

Sir Luc. Pray be easy.

gold, hence used in cheap jewelry. Named after its inventor, Christopher Pinchbeck, a London watch-maker.

117. **the milk of human kindness**: *Macbeth* i, 5, 15.

Acres. Well then [*Writing*] — "*honour of your company*" —

Sir Luc. "*To settle our pretensions*" —

Acres. [*Writing*] Well —

Sir Luc. Let me see — aye, *King's Mead-fields* will do — "*In King's Mead-fields.*"

Acres. So that's done. — Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest — a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see now, this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time. — Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening. — I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, [170 who put a jest on me lately at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you.

151. **King's Mead-fields** : an extensive meadow to the west of the city. See the map.

— Well for the present — but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner. — Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword.

[*Exeunt severally.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Scene I. Acres's *Lodgings.*

Acres *and* David.

David. Then, by the Mass, Sir! I would do no such thing — ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say when she hears o't!

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius! — Odds sparks and flames! he would have rous'd your valour.

David. Not he, indeed. I hates such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, Master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off: but for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of 'em.

Acres. But my *honour*, David, my *honour!* I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Aye, by the Mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think in return my *honour* couldn't do less than to be very careful of *me.*

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say then, it would be but civil in *honour*

12. **sharps**: keen-pointed duelling swords. — **snaps**: pistols.

never to risk the loss of the *gentleman.* — Lookee, Master, this *honour* seems to me to be a marvellous false friend; aye, truly, a very courtier-like servant. — Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well — my honour makes me [25 quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance. — So — we fight. (Pleasant enough that.) Boh! — I kill him — (the more's my luck). Now, pray who gets the profit of it? — Why, my *honour.* — But put the case that he kills me! — by the Mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy! 31

Acres. No, David — in that case! — Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it. 35

Acres. Z——ds, David, you're a coward! — It doesn't become my valour to listen to you. — What, shall I disgrace my ancestors? — Think of that, David — think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest way of not dis- [40 gracing them is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, Master, to go to them in such haste — with an ounce of lead in your brains — I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with. 46

Acres. But David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, *very* great danger, hey? — Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done! 49

David. By the Mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you! — Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I

22. **this honour**, etc.: Sheridan has in mind Falstaff's famous "catechism on honour," *1 Henry IV*, v, 1.

warrant, with his d—n'd double-barrell'd swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't. — Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide 'em! [55 — from a child I never could fancy 'em! — I suppose there a'n't so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Z—ds! I *won't* be afraid! — Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid! — Here is the [60 challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

David. Aye, i' the name of mischief, let *him* be the messenger. — For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the Mass! it [65 don't look like another letter! It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter! — and I warrant smells of gunpowder, like a soldier's pouch! — Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off! 69

Acres. Out, you poltroon! — you ha'n't the valour of a grasshopper.

David. Well, I say no more. — 'Twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod-Hall! — but I ha' done. — How Phillis will howl when she hears of it! — Aye, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her Master's [75 going after! — And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering*

Acres. It won't do, David — I am determined to fight — so get along, you Coward, while I'm in the mind. 81

Enter Servant.

Serv. Captain Absolute, Sir,

Acres. O! shew him up. [*Exit* Servant.

David. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

Acres. What's that! — Don't provoke me, David!

David. Good bye, Master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* David.

Enter Absolute.

Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead! — If I hadn't the valour of St. George and the dragon to boot ——

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. O! — There —— [*Gives him the challenge.*

Abs. "*To Ensign Beverley.*" So — what's going on now? [*Aside*] — Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Abs. Indeed! — Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack. — Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage — and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal *defiance.*

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack: but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least — I beg you won't mention it. — No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind. — What it is to have a friend! — You couldn't be my second — could you, Jack?

Abs. Why no, Bob — not in *this* affair — it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well then, I must fix on my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the Captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly. — Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.* [

Acres. Stay — stay, Jack. — If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow — will you, Jack?

Abs. To be sure I shall. — I'll say you are a determined dog — hey, Bob?

Acres. Aye, do, do — and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week — will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are call'd in the country "*Fighting Bob!*"

Acres. Right, right — 'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life if I clear my honour.

Abs. No! — that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him — do you, Jack?

Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not. — But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true. — But stay — stay, Jack — you may add that you never saw me in such a rage before — a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack — a determined dog!

Abs. Aye, aye, "*Fighting Bob!*" [*Exeunt severally*

SCENE II. *Mrs.* Malaprop's *Lodgings.*

Mrs. Malaprop *and* Lydia.

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou perverse one! — tell me what you can object to him? — Isn't he a handsome man? — tell me that. — A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lyd. She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside*] — So is Beverley, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. No caparisons, Miss, if you please! — Caparisons don't become a young woman. — No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman!

Lyd. Aye, the Captain Absolute *you* have seen. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Then he's *so* well bred; — *so* full of alacrity, and adulation! — and has *so much* to say for himself: — in such good language, too! — His physiognomy so grammatical! — Then his presence is so noble! — I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play: — "Hesperian curls! — the front of *Job* himself! — An eye, like *March*, to threaten at command! — A Station, like Harry Mercury, new —" something about kissing — on a hill — however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lyd. How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, Ma'am.

16. **Hamlet says,** etc.: *Hamlet* iii, 4, 56–59:

> Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.

Mrs. Mal. Shew them up here. [*Exit* Serv.
Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman. — Shew your good breeding at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lyd. Madam, I have told you my resolution; — I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I [30
won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*

Enter Sir Anthony *and* Absolute.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop, come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty — and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow. — I don't know what 's the matter; but if I hadn't held him by force, he 'd have given me the slip. 36

Mrs. Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair. I am ashamed for the cause! — Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you! — pay your respects!

[*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Lau- [40
guish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her Aunt's choice, and *my* alliance. — Now, Jack, speak to her! [*Aside to him.*

Abs. What the d—l shall I do! [*Aside*] — You see, Sir, she won't even look at me whilst you are [45
here. — I knew she wouldn't! — I told you so. — Let me entreat you, Sir, to leave us together!

[Absolute *seems to expostulate with his Father.*

Lyd. [*Aside*] I wonder I ha'n't heard my Aunt exclaim yet! Sure she can't have look'd at him! — Perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind. 51

Sir Anth. I say, Sir, I won't stir a foot yet!

Mrs. Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my Niece is very small. —Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you! [*Aside to her.* 55

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son! — Why don't you begin, Jack? — Speak, you puppy — speak! [*Aside to him.* [59

Mrs. Mal. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any. — She will not *say* she has. — Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, Madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness. — Z—ds! sirrah! why don't you speak? [65 [*Aside to him.*

Lyd. [*Aside*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself. — How strangely blind my Aunt is!

Abs. Hem! hem! — Madam — hem! — [Absolute *attempts to speak, then returns to Sir* Antho- [70 ny] — Faith! Sir, I am so confounded! — and so — so — confused! — I told you I should be so, Sir, — I knew it. — The — the — tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind. 74

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it? — Go up, and speak to her directly!

[Abs. *makes signs to Mrs.* Mal. *to leave them together.*

Mrs. Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together? — Ah! you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, Ma'am, not yet! What the d—l are you at? Unlock your jaws, sirrah, or —— [80 [*Aside to him.*

Absolute *draws near* Lydia.

Abs. [*Aside*] Now Heav'n send she may be too

sullen to look round! — I must disguise my voice. —
[*Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*
—— Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? — Will not —— 84

Sir Anth. What the d—l ails the fellow? — Why don't you speak out? — not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Abs. The — the — excess of my awe, and my — my — my modesty quite choak me! 89

Sir Anth. Ah! your *modesty* again! — I'll tell you what, Jack, if you don't speak out directly, and glibly, too, I shall be in such a rage! — Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front!

[*Mrs.* Malaprop *seems to chide* Lydia.

Abs. [*Aside*] So! — all will out I see! 95

[*Goes up to* Lydia, *speaks softly.*

Be not surprised, my Lydia; suppress all surprise at present.

Lyd. [*Aside*] Heav'ns! 'tis Beverley's voice! — Sure he can't have impos'd on Sir Anthony, too! —
[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*
Is this possible! — my Beverley! — how can this be? — my Beverley? 101

Abs. Ah! 'tis all over. [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley! — the devil! — Beverley! — What can the girl mean? — This is my son, Jack Absolute! 105

Mrs. Mal. For shame, hussy! for shame! — your head runs so on that fellow that you have him always in your eyes! — Beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly. 109

87. **quinsey** : an inflammation of the throat.

Lyd. I see no Captain Absolute, but my lov'd Beverley!

Sir Anth. Z—ds! the girl's mad! — her brain's turn'd by reading!

Mrs. Mal. O' my conscience, I believe so! — What do you mean by Beverley, hussy? — You saw [115 Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is — your husband that shall be.

Lyd. With all my soul, Ma'am. — When I refuse my Beverley —— 119

Sir Anth. O! she's as mad as Bedlam! — Or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick! — Come here, sirrah! — who the d—l are you?

Abs. Faith, Sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect. 124

Sir Anth. Are you my son, or not? — answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs. Mal. Aye, Sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect! ——

Abs. Ye Powers of Impudence befriend me! [*Aside*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your [130 wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be *your's* also, I hope my duty has always shewn. — Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer — and shall be proud to add *affectionate nephew.* — I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Bev- [135 erley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assum'd that name, and a station which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character. [139

120. **Bedlam**: the common name for the famous madhouse in London, the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem (corrupted into Bedlam).

Lyd. [*Sullenly*] So! — there will be no elopement after all!

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. O you flatter me, Sir — you compliment — 'tis my *modesty* you know, Sir — my *modesty* that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however! — I 'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog — I am. —— So this was your *penitence*, your *duty*, and *obedience!* — I thought it was d—n'd sudden! — You *never heard their names before*, not you! — *What, Languishes of Worcestershire*, hey? — *if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!* — Ah! you dissembling villain! — What! — [*Pointing to* Lydia] *she squints, don't she? — a little red-hair'd girl!* — hey? — Why, you hypocritical young rascal! — I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, Sir. — I *am* confus'd — very much confus'd, as you must perceive.

Mrs. Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony! — a new light breaks in upon me! — Hey! how! what! Captain, did *you* write the letters then? — What! — I am to thank *you* for the elegant compilation of "*an old weather-beaten she-dragon*" — hey? — O mercy! — was it *you* that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abs. Dear Sir! my modesty will be overpower'd at last, if you don't assist me. — I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must

forget and forgive. — Odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humour'd! and so gallant! — hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since *you* desire it, we will not anticipate the past; — so mind, young people — our retrospection will now be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant! [*Aside*] — Jack — isn't the *cheek* as I said, hey? — and the eye, you dog! — and the lip — hey? — Come, Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness — theirs is the time of life for happiness! —— "*Youth's the season made for joy*" — [*Sings*] — hey! — Odds life! I'm in such spirits, — I don't know what I couldn't do! — Permit me, Ma'am — [*Gives his hand to Mrs.* Mal. *Sings*] Tol-de-rol! — 'gad, I should like a little fooling myself — Tol-de-rol! de-rol!

[*Exit singing, and handing Mrs.* Mal. Lydia *sits sullenly in her chair.*

Abs. So much thought bodes me no good [*Aside*]. — So grave, Lydia!

Lyd. Sir!

Abs. So! — egad! I thought as much! — That d—n'd monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside*] — What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our *friends' consent*, as in our *mutual vows* ——

Lyd. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*

Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance — a little *wealth* and *comfort* may be en-

187. **Youth's the season made for joy:** A song from Gay's *The Beggar's Opera.*

dur'd after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as ——

Lyd. *Lawyers!* — I *hate* lawyers! 205

Abs. Nay then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and ——

Lyd. The *licence!* — I *hate* licence!

Abs. Oh my Love! *be* not so unkind! — Thus let me intreat —— [*Kneeling.* [210

Lyd. Pshaw! — what signifies kneeling when you know I *must* have you?

Abs. [*Rising*] Nay, Madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you. — If I have lost your *heart*, — I resign the rest. — 'Gad, [215 I must try what a little *spirit* will do. [*Aside.*

Lyd. [*Rising*] Then, Sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. — What, you have been treating *me* like [220 a *child!* — humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me. — Only hear —— 224

Lyd. So, while *I* fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flatter'd myself that I should outwit and incense them *all* — behold! my hopes are to be crush'd at once, by my Aunt's consent and approbation! — and *I* am *myself* the only dupe at last!

[*Walking about in heat.*

Abs. Nay, but hear me —— 230

Lyd. No, Sir, you could not think that such paltry artifices could please me, when the mask was thrown off! — But I suppose since your tricks have made you secure of my *fortune*, you are little solicitous

about my *affections*. — But here, Sir, here is the [235 picture — Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom*] which I have worn, night and day in spite of threats and entreaties! — There, Sir. [*Flings it to him*] — and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily! [240

Abs. Nay, nay, Ma'am, we will not differ as to that. — Here [*Taking out a picture*], *here* is Miss Lydia Languish. — What a difference! — Aye, *there* is the heav'nly assenting smile that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes! — those are the lips [245 which seal'd a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar! — and *there*, the *half* resentful blush that *would* have check'd the ardour of my thanks. — Well, all that's past! — all over indeed! — There, Madam — in *beauty*, that copy is not equal to [250 you, but in my mind it's merit over the original, in being still the same, is such — that — I cannot find in my heart to *part with* it. [*Puts it up again*

Lyd. [*Softening*] 'Tis *your own* doing, Sir. — I — I — I suppose you are perfectly satisfied. 255

Abs. O, most certainly. — Sure now this is much better than being in love! — ha! ha! ha! — There's some spirit in *this!* — What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises, half an hundred vows, under one's hand, with the marks of a dozen or [260 two angels to witness! — all that's of no consequence, you know. — To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind — but never mind that: — or perhaps they may be ill-natured enough to hint that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her — but don't let that fret you. 266

252. **still**: always

Lyd. There's no bearing his insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter Mrs. Malaprop *and Sir* Anthony.

Mrs. Mal. [*Entering*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lyd. This is *worse* than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now! — Z—ds! Mrs. Malaprop, this is the *oddest billing* and *cooing* I ever heard! — But what the deuce is the meaning of it? — I 'm quite astonished!

Abs. Ask the lady, Sir.

Mrs. Mal. O mercy! — I' m quite analys'd, for my part! — Why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lyd. Ask the *gentleman*, Ma'am.

Sir Anth. Z—ds! I shall be in a phrenzy! — Why Jack, you scoundrel, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs. Mal. Aye, Sir, there's no more *trick*, is there? — You are not like Cerberus, *three* Gentlemen at once, are you?

Abs. You'll not let me speak. — I say the *lady* can account for *this* much better than I can.

Lyd. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again — *there* is the man — I now obey you: — for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* Lydia. [291

Mrs. Mal. O mercy! and miracles! what a turn here is! — Why sure, Captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my Niece?

Sir Anth. Ha! ha! ha! — ha! ha! ha! — now I see it — ha! ha! ha! — now I see it — you have been too lively, Jack.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word ——

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack — I'm sure *'twas* so.

Mrs. Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony! — O fie, Captain!

Abs. Upon my soul, Ma'am ——

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack; — why, your father, you rogue, was so before you: — the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient. — Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia! — Why, you've frighten'd her, you Dog, you have.

Abs. By all that's good, Sir ——

Sir Anth. Z—ds! say no more, I tell you. — Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace. — You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop; — you must tell her 'tis Jack's way — tell her 'tis all our ways — it runs in the blood of our family! — Come, get on, Jack — ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop — a young villain!

[*Pushing him out.*

Mrs. Mal. O! Sir Anthony! — O fie, Captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III. *The* North-Parade.

Enter Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Sir Luc. I wonder where this Capt. Absolute hides himself. — Upon my conscience! — these officers are always in one's way in love-affairs. — I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a Major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! — And I wonder too what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them — unless it be a touch of the old serpent in 'em, that makes the little creatures be caught,

like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. — Hah! — isn't this the Captain coming? — faith it is! — There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow that is mighty provoking! — Who the devil is he talking to?

[*Steps aside*

Enter Capt. Absolute.

Abs. To what fine purpose I have been plotting! A noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul! — A little gypsey! — I did not think her romance could have made her so d—n'd absurd either. — S'death, I never was in a worse humour in my life! — I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir Luc. O, faith! I'm in the luck of it — I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose — to be sure I'm just come in the nick! Now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly. [Sir Lucius *goes up to* Absolute] ——With regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abs. Upon my word then, you must be a very subtle disputant: — because, Sir, I happen'd just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason. — For give me leave to tell you, a man may *think* an untruth as well as *speak* one.

Abs. Very true, Sir, but if a man never utters his thoughts I should think they *might* stand a *chance* of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, Sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

10. **vipers . . . red cloth**: many animals are affected by the color red: cf. the phrase "like a red rag before a bull."

Abs. Hark'ee, Sir Lucius, — if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview: — for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, Sir, for the quickness of your apprehension. — [*Bowing*] — You have nam'd the very thing I would be at.

Abs. Very well, Sir — I shall certainly not baulk your inclinations — but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir Luc. Pray, Sir, be easy — the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands — we should only spoil it by trying to explain it. — However, your memory is very short — or you could not have forgot an affront you pass'd on me within this week. — So no more, but name your time and place.

Abs. Well, Sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better; — let it be this evening — here, by the Spring-Gardens. — We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shews very great ill-breeding. — I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. — However, if it's the same to you, Captain, I should take it as a particular kindness if you'd let us meet in King's Mead-Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

58. **Spring-Gardens**: an enclosed pleasure ground just across the river to the east of the city. It was surrounded by fields well suited for duels. See the map.

Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly. — A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, Sir, there will be very pretty small-sword light, tho' it won't do for a long shot. So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease!

[*Exit* Sir Lucius.

Enter Faulkland, *meeting* Absolute.

Abs. Well met. — I was going to look for you. — O, Faulkland! all the Dæmons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vex'd that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knock'd o' the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean? — Has Lydia chang'd her mind? — I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abs. Aye, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: — when her *love-eye* was fix'd on *me* — t'other — her *eye* of *duty*, was finely obliqued: — but when duty bid her point *that* the same way — off t'other turn'd on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you ——

Abs. O, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has — [*Mimicking Sir* Lucius] — beg'd leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat — and I mean to indulge him — that's all.

Faulk. Prithee, be serious.

Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul. — Sir Lucius O'Trigger — you know him by sight — for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet

him this evening at six o'clock. — 'Tis on that [100 account I wish'd to see you — you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. — Sir Lucius shall explain himself — and I dare say matters may be accommodated. — But this evening, did you say? — I wish it had been any other time. [105

Abs. Why? — there will be light enough: — there will (as Sir Lucius says) "be very pretty small-sword light, tho' it won't do for a long shot." — Confound his long shots! 109

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled by a difference I have had with Julia — my vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abs. By Heav'ns, Faulkland, you don't deserve her.

Enter Servant, *gives* Faulkland *a letter.*

Faulk. O Jack! this is from Julia. — I dread [115 to open it. — I fear it may be to take a last leave — perhaps to bid me return her letters — and restore —— O! how I suffer for my folly!

Abs. Here — let me see. [*Takes the letter and opens it*] Aye, a final sentence indeed! — 'tis all over with you, faith! 121

Faulk. Nay, Jack — don't keep me in suspense.

Abs. Hear then. — "*As I am convinced that my dear* Faulkland's *own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I* [125 *will not add a word on the subject. — I wish to speak with you as soon as possible. — Your's ever and truly,* Julia." — There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the letter*] Why, man, you don't seem one whit happier at this. 130

Faulk. O, yes, I am — but — but ———

Abs. Confound your *buts.* — You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately d—n it with a *but.*

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly — don't you think there is something forward — something indelicate in this haste to forgive? — Women should never sue for reconciliation: — *that* should *always* come from us. — *They* should retain their coldness till *woo'd* to kindness — and their *pardon*, like their *love*, should "not unsought be won."

Abs. I have not patience to listen to you: — thou'rt incorrigible! — so say no more on the subject. — I must go to settle a few matters. — Let me see you before six — remember — at my lodgings. — A poor industrious devil like me, who have toil'd, and drudg'd, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly — may in pity be allowed to swear and grumble a little; — but a captious sceptic in love, — a slave to fretfulness and whim — who has no difficulties but of *his own* creating — is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion!

[*Exit* Absolute.

Faulk. I feel his reproaches! — yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety for the gross content with which *he* tramples on the thorns of love. — His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue. — I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness. — If her love prove pure and sterling ore — my name will rest on it with honour! — and once

141. **not unsought be won**: quoted from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, viii, 503.

I've stamp'd it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever: — but if the dross of selfishness, the allay of pride predominate — 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious Fool to sigh for. [*Exit* Faulkland.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

SCENE I. Julia's *Dressing-Room.*

Julia, *sola.*

Jul. How this message has alarmed me! What dreadful accident can he mean! why such charge to be alone? — O Faulkland! — how many unhappy moments! — how many tears have you cost me!

Enter Faulkland, *muffled up in a Riding-coat.*

Jul. What means this? — why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas! Julia, I am come to take a long farewell.

Jul. Heav'ns! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. — Nay, start not! — the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. — I left you fretful and passionate — an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel — the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. — O Julia, had I been so for- [15 tunate as to have call'd you mine intirely before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment! — But no more of that — your

Scene I: The first part of this scene was probably suggested by an incident in *Sidney Bidulph*, the novel by Sheridan's mother. See the Introduction, p. xxi.

heart and promise were given to one happy in friends, character and station! they are not bound to wait upon a solitary, guilty exile.

Jul. My soul is oppres'd with sorrow at the *nature* of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could *now* chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. — My heart has long known no other guardian. — I now entrust my person to your honour — we will fly together. — When safe from pursuit, my Father's will may be fulfilled — and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a Cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! But the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution — would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

Jul. I ask not a moment. — No, Faulkland, I have lov'd you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love. — But let us not linger. — Perhaps this delay ——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. — Yet am I griev'd to think what

numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Jul. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act. — I know not whether 'tis so — but [55 sure that alone can never make us unhappy. — The little I have will be sufficient to *support* us; and *exile* never should be splendid.

Faulk. Aye, but in such an abject state of life my wounded pride perhaps may increase the natural [60 fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify, may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, [65 break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Jul. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you: — one who, by bearing *your* infirmities with gentleness and [70 resignation, may teach you *so* to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. O Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last [75 unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Jul. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was all pretended; yet in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but seal- [80 ing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly by years of tender adoration.

Jul. Hold, Faulkland! — That you are free from a crime which I before fear'd to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! — These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By Heav'ns! Julia ——

Jul. Yet hear me. — My Father lov'd you, Faulkland! and you preserv'd the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand — [*joyfully* pledged it — where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seem'd to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shewn me whither to transfer without a pause my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence I have been content to bear from you what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. — I will not upbraid you by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity. ——

Faulk. I confess it all! yet hear ——

Jul. After such a year of trial — I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! A trick of such a nature as to shew me plainly that when I thought you lov'd me best, you even then regarded me as a mean dissembler; an artful, prudent hypocrite.

Faulk. Never! never!

Jul. I now see it is not in your nature to be content or confident in love. With this conviction — I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention and unreproaching kindness

might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gain'd a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to [120 keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but Julia, by my soul and honour, if after this —— 124

Jul. But one word more. — As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. — I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you will be to charm you from that unhappy temper which alone has prevented the per- [130 formance of our solemn engagement. — All I request of *you* is that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity, and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of — let it not be your *least* regret that it lost you the love of one — who would have [135 follow'd you in beggary through the world! [*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone! — for ever! — There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. — O Fool! — Dolt! — Barbarian! — Curst as I am with more imperfections than my fellow- [140 wretches, kind Fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side! — I must now haste to my appointment. — Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene. — I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale [145 my cursed folly put me upon forging here. — O Love! — Tormentor! — Fiend! — whose influence, like the Moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [*Exit.* [150

Enter Maid *and* Lydia.

Maid. My Mistress, Ma'am, I know, was here just now — perhaps she is only in the next room. [*Exit* Maid.

Lyd. Heigh ho! — Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave Cousin will make me recall him. 156

Enter Julia.

Lyd. O Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation. — Lud! Child, what's the matter with you? — You have been crying! — I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you! 161

Jul. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness. — Something *has* flurried me a little. — Nothing that you can guess at. — [*Aside*] I would not accuse Faulkland to a Sister! 165

Lyd. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them. — You know who Beverley proves to be?

Jul. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr. Faulkland had before inform'd me of the whole affair. [170 Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lyd. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! — But I don't care — I'll never have him. [176

Jul. Nay, Lydia ——

Lyd. Why, is it not provoking; when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at [180

180. **Smithfield bargain**: "Frequently used to express matches, or marriages, contracted solely on the score of interest,

last! — There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! — so becoming a disguise! — so amiable a ladder of Ropes! — Conscious Moon — four horses — Scotch parson — with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop — and such paragraphs in the News-papers! — O, I shall die with disappointment! 186

Jul. I don't wonder at it!

Lyd. Now — sad reverse! — what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation, with a bishop's licence, and my Aunt's blessing, to go simpering [190 up to the Altar; or perhaps be cried three times in a country-church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, *Spinster!* O, that I should live to hear myself called Spinster! 195

Jul. Melancholy, indeed!

Lyd. How mortifying to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow! — How often have I stole forth in the coldest night in January, and [200 found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue! — There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! And while the freezing blast numb'd our joints, how warmly would he press [205 me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour! — Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Jul. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you

on one or both sides, where the fair sex are bought and sold like cattle in Smithfield." — Grose, *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785). Smithfield was originally the great London market for cattle.

184. **Scotch parson**: famous for marrying runaway couples from England.

only by laughing heartily at you: but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to [210 entreat you not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your *caprice*, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lyd. O Lud! what has brought my Aunt here!

Enter Mrs. Malaprop, Fag, *and* David.

Mrs. Mal. So! so! here's fine work! — here's [215 fine suicide, paracide, and salivation going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe!

Jul. For Heaven's sake, Madam, what's the meaning of this? 220

Mrs. Mal. That gentleman can tell you — 'twas he enveloped the affair to me.

Lyd. Do, Sir, will you, inform us. [*To* Fag.

Fag. Ma'am, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding [225 if I delay'd a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

Lyd. But quick! quick, Sir! 229

Fag. True, Ma'am, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps while we are flourishing on the subject two or three lives may be lost!

Lyd. O patience! — Do, Ma'am, for Heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter! 235

Mrs. Mal. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's

216. **salivation**: an excessive flow of saliva, accompanied often with soreness of the mouth, and dropping of the teeth; due generally to an overdose of some compound of mercury. The third edition reads "simulation."

the matter! killing's the matter! — But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lyd. Then, prythee, Sir, be brief.

Fag. Why then, Ma'am — as to murder — I cannot take upon me to say — and as to slaughter, or man-slaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lyd. But who, Sir — who are engaged in this?

Fag. Faith, Ma'am, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry anything was to happen to — a very pretty behaved gentleman! — We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lyd. But who is this? who! who! who!

Fag. My Master, Ma'am — my Master — I speak of my Master.

Lyd. Heavens! What, Captain Absolute!

Mrs. Mal. O, to be sure, you are frightened now!

Jul. But who are with him, Sir?

Fag. As to the rest, Ma'am, his gentleman can inform you better than I.

Jul. Do speak, friend. [*To* David.

David. Look'ee, my Lady — by the Mass! there's mischief going on. — Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, fire-locks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers besides! — This, my Lady, I say, has an angry favour.

Jul. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor Master — under favour, for mentioning him first. — You know me, my Lady — I am David — and my Master, of course, is, or *was*, Squire Acres. — Then comes Squire Faulkland.

Jul. Do, Ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs. Mal. O fie — it would be very inelegant in us: — we should only participate things.

Dav. Ah! do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives. — They are desperately given, believe me. — Above all, [274 there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger! — O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape? — Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire Putrefactions!

Lyd. What are we to do, Madam? 281

Mrs. Mal. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief. — Here, friend — you can shew us the place? 284

Fag. If you please, Ma'am, I will conduct you. — David, do you look for Sir Anthony. [*Exit* David

Mrs. Mal. Come, girls! — this gentleman will exhort us. — Come, Sir, you're our envoy — lead the way, and we'll precede. 289

Fag. Not a step before the ladies for the world!

Mrs. Mal. You're sure you know the spot?

Fag. I think I can find it, Ma'am; and one good thing is we shall hear the report of the pistols as we draw near, so we can't well miss them: never fear, Ma'am, never fear. [*Exeunt, he talking.*

SCENE II. South-Parade.

Enter Absolute, *putting his sword under his great-coat.*

Abs. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad-dog. How provoking this

280. **Putrefactions**: petrifactions. Derbyshire is famous for its fossils. See *The Victoria History of the County of Derby* (London, 1905), vol. i.

1. **sword . . . Bath**: see iii, 4, 74, note.

is in Faulkland! — never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last. — O, the devil! here's Sir Anthony! —— How shall I escape him?

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*

Enter Sir Anthony.

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance! Only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack! — Hey! — 'Gad's life! it is. — Why, Jack, you Dog! — what are you afraid of? — hey! — sure I'm right. — Why, Jack! — Jack Absolute! [*Goes up to him.* [11

Abs. Really, Sir, you have the advantage of me: — I don't remember ever to have had the honour —— my name is Saunderson, at your service. 14

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon — I took you — hey! — why, z—ds! it is —— Stay —— [*Looks up to his face*] — So, so — your humble servant, Mr. Saunderson! — Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

Abs. O, a joke, Sir, a joke! — I came here on purpose to look for you, Sir. 21

Sir Anth. You did! Well, I am glad you were so lucky. — But what are you muffled up so for? — what's this for? — hey?

Abs. Tis cool, Sir; isn't it? — rather chilly, somehow? — But I shall be late — I have a particular engagement. 27

Sir Anth. Stay. — Why, I thought you were looking for me? — Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, Sir!

Sir Anth. Aye — where are you going? 31

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, Sir, to — to — to — to Lydia — Sir, to Lydia — to make matters up if I could; — and I was looking for you, Sir, to — to ——— 36

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose. — Well, come along.

Abs. O! z—ds! no, Sir, not for the world! — I wish'd to meet with you, Sir, — to — to — to —— [40 You find it cool, I'm sure, Sir — you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool! — not at all. — Well, Jack — and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. O, Sir, beg her pardon, humour her — [45 promise and vow: — but I detain you, Sir — consider the cold air on your gout.

Sir Anth. O, not at all! — not at all! — I'm in no hurry. — Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here — [*Putting his hand to Absolute's breast*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here? [51

Abs. Nothing, Sir — nothing.

Sir Anth. What's this? — Here's something d—d hard! 54

Abs. O, trinkets, Sir! trinkets — a bauble for Lydia!

Sir Anth. Nay, let me see your taste. [*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls*] Trinkets! — a bauble for Lydia! — z—ds! sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you? 59

Abs. Ha! ha! ha! — I thought it would divert you, Sir; tho' I didn't mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You didn't? — Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly!

Abs. Sir, I'll explain to you. — You know, Sir, Lydia is romantic — dev'lish romantic, and very absurd [65 of course. — Now, Sir, I intend, if she refuses to for-

give me — to unsheath this sword — and swear — I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

Sir Anth. Fall upon fiddle-stick's end! — why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her. — Get along, you Fool. —

Abs. Well, Sir, you shall hear of my success — you shall hear. — "O Lydia! — forgive me, or this pointed steel" — says I.

Sir Anth. "O, Booby! stab away and welcome" — says she. — Get along! — and d—n your trinkets!

[*Exit* Absolute.

Enter David *running.*

Dav. Stop him! Stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire! — Stop fire! Stop fire! — O! Sir Anthony — Call! Call! Bid 'em stop! Murder! Fire!

Sir Anth. Fire! Murder! Where?

Dav. Oons! he's out of sight! and I'm out of breath for my part! O, Sir Anthony, why didn't you stop him? why didn't you stop him?

Sir Anth. Z—ds! the fellow's mad! — Stop whom? Stop Jack?

Dav. Aye, the Captain, Sir! — There's murder and slaughter ——

Sir Anth. Murder!

Dav. Aye, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter to be seen in the [90 fields: there's fighting going on, Sir — bloody sword-and-gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, Dunce?

Dav. Every body that I know of, Sir Anthony: — every body is going to fight; my poor Master, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the Captain —— [96

Sir Anth. O, the Dog! — I see his tricks. — Do you know the place?

Dav. King's Mead-Fields.

Sir Anth. You know the way?

Dav. Not an inch; — but I'll call the Mayor — Aldermen — Constables — Church-wardens — and Beadles. — We can't be too many to part them.

Sir Anth. Come along. — Give me your shoulder! We'll get assistance as we go. — The lying villain! — Well, I shall be in such a frenzy! — So — this was the history of his d—d trinkets! I'll bauble him!

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III. King's Mead-Fields.

Sir Lucius *and* Acres, *with pistols.*

Acres. By my valour! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. — Odds levels and aims! — I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me. — Stay now — I'll shew you. — [*Measures paces along the stage*] There now, that is a very pretty distance — a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Z—ds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! — I'll tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius — but I should think forty, or eight and thirty yards ——

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! nonsense! Three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no! — By my valour! there is no merit in killing him so near. — Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot: — a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir Luc. Well — the gentleman's friend and I must settle that. — But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius — but I don't understand ——

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk — and if an unlucky bullet should carry a *Quietus* with it — I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A *Quietus!*

Sir Luc. For instance, now — if that should be the case — would you chuse to be pickled and sent home? — or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? — I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled! — Snug lying in the Abbey! — Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah! that's a pity! — there's nothing like being used to a thing. — Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files! — I've practised that. — There, Sir Lucius — there [*Puts himself in an attitude*] —— a side-front, hey? — Odd! I'll make myself small enough: — I'll stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. Now — you're quite out — for if you stand so when I take my aim —— [*Levelling at him.*

Acres. Z—ds! Sir Lucius — are you sure it is not cock'd?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

36. **Abbey**: The cathedral church of Bath. See the map.

Acres. But — but — you don't know — it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy. — Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance — for if it misses a vital part of your right side — 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part! O, my poor vitals!

Sir Luc. But, there — fix yourself so. — [*Placing him*] Let him see the broad side of your full front. — There. — Now a ball or two may pass clean thro' your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean thro' me! — a ball or two clean thro' me!

Sir Luc. Aye — may they — and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius — I'd just as lieve be shot in an aukward posture as a genteel one — so, by my valour! I will stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking at his watch*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us — hah? — No, faith — I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey! — What! — Coming! ——

Sir Luc. Aye. — Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them indeed! — Well — let them come — hey, Sir Lucius? we — we — we — we — won't run. —

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No — I say — we *won't* run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing — nothing — my dear friend — my dear Sir Lucius — but — I — I — I don't feel quite so bold, somehow — as I did.

Sir Luc. O fie! — consider your honour.

Acres. Aye — true — my honour. — Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius — if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid. — If my valour should leave me! — Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then, pray, keep it fast while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius — I doubt it is going. — Yes — my valour is certainly going! — It is sneaking off! — I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour — your honour. — Here they are.

Acres. O mercy! — now — that I were safe at *Clod-Hall*! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter Faulkland *and* Absolute.

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient — hah! — what — Captain Absolute! — So, I suppose, Sir, you are come here, just like myself — to do a kind office, first for your friend — then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack! — my dear Jack! — my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr. Acres — I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly. — So, Mr. Beverley [*to* Faulkland], if you'll chuse your weapons, the Captain and I will measure the ground.

103–4. **now — that I were safe at Clod-Hall!** Cf. Falstaff on the battle-field, *I Henry IV*, v, 2, 125: "I would 'twere bed-time, Hal, and all well."

Falk. *My* weapons, Sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland. These are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, Sir, did not you come here to fight Mr. Acres? 121

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, Sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game — you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out. 126

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter —— 129

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland — I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian. — Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr. Acres — I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged some- [135 body — and you came here to fight him. — Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him — I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Z—ds, Sir Lucius — I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged — a fellow, you see, that [140 dare not shew his face! If *he* were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly! ——

Abs. Hold, Bob — let me set you right. — There is no such man as Beverley in the case. — The person who assumed that name is before you; and as [145 his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky! — Now you have an opportunity —— 149

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute? — Not if he were fifty Beverleys! Z—ds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me be so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has *oozed* away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds Backs and Abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart — and if you should get a *Quietus*, you may command me entirely. I'll get you a *snug lying* in the *Abbey here;* or *pickle* you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a *Coward;* Coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Luc. Well, Sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word Coward. — *Coward* may be said in joke. — But if you had call'd me a *Poltroon*, Odds Daggers and Balls! ——

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. ——— I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres. — He is a most *determined dog* — call'd in the country, *Fighting Bob.* — He generally *kills a man a week;* don't you, Bob?

Acres. Aye — at home!

Sir Luc. Well then, Captain, 'tis we must begin. — So come out, my little counsellor [*Draws his sword*], and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady without forcing you to proceed against him.

Abs. Come on then, Sir ; [*Draws*] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's *my reply.*

Enter Sir Anthony, David, *and the* Women.

David. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony ; knock down my Master in particular — and bind his hands over to their good behaviour !

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a frenzy. — How came you in a duel, Sir?

Abs. Faith, Sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I ; 'twas he call'd on me, and you know, Sir, I serve his Majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow ! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me he serves his Majesty ! — Zounds ! sirrah, then how durst you draw the King's sword against one of his subjects?

Abs. Sir, I tell you ! That gentleman call'd me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad ! Sir, how came you to call my son out without explaining your reasons?

Sir Luc. Your son, Sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds ! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs. Mal. Come, come, let's have no Honour before ladies. — Captain Absolute, come here. — How could you intimidate us so ? — Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abs. For fear I should be kill'd, or escape, Ma'am ?

Mrs. Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past. — Lydia is convinc'd. — Speak child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, Ma'am, I must put in a

word here. — I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence. — Now mark —— 215

Lyd. What is it you mean, Sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now — this is no time for trifling.

Lyd. 'Tis true, Sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections. 221

Abs. O! my little angel, say you so? — Sir Lucius — I perceive there must be some mistake here. — With regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you — I can only say that it could not have been in- [225 tentional. — And as you must be convinced that I should not fear to support a real injury — you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency. — I ask your pardon. — But for this lady, while honour'd with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever. 231

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack! and I'll stand by you, my Boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim — I make no pretensions to anything in the world — and if I [235 can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my Valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand. — An affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation. — And as for the Lady — if she chuses to deny her own hand-writing here —— [*Taking out letters.* [241

Mrs. Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery! — Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake — perhaps, I can illuminate —— 244

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business. — Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lyd. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[Lydia *and* Absolute *walk aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger — ungrateful as you are — I own the soft impeachment. — Pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir Luc. You Delia! — pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke! — those letters are mine. — When you are more sensible of my benignity — perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you. — And to shew you I'm not ungrateful — Captain [260 Absolute! since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's our friend, fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little Valour — here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds Wrinkles! No. — But give us your hand, Sir Lucius; forget and forgive. But if ever I give you a chance of *pickling* me again, say Bob Acres is a Dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down — you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. Mal. O Sir Anthony! — men are all barbarians ——

[*All retire but* Julia *and* Faulkland. [274

Jul. [*Aside*] He seems dejected and unhappy — not sullen. — There was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me. — O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia! — how can I sue for what I so little

deserve? I dare not presume — yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

Jul. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!

[Sir Anthony *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here? — So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant. — Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last. — All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland seemed to proceed from what he calls the *delicacy* and *warmth* of his affection for you. — There, marry him directly, Julia. You'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir Luc. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better ——

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius. — So, Jack, I wish you joy. — Mr. Faulkland the same. — Ladies, — come now, to shew you I'm neither vex'd nor angry, Odds Tabors and Pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms — and I insist on you all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad! Sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack — I

hope to be congratulated by each other — yours for having checked in time the errors of an ill-directed Imagination, which might have betray'd an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have ador'd.

Abs. Well, Faulkland, we have both tasted the Bitters, as well as the Sweets, of Love — with this difference only, that *you* always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while *I* ——

Lyd. Was always obliged to *me* for it, hey, Mr. Modesty? —— But come, no more of that — our happiness is now as unalloy'd as general.

Jul. Then let us study to preserve it so; and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future Bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting. — When Hearts deserving Happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier Rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its Leaves are dropt!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

Spoken by Mrs. Bulkley.

LADIES, for *You* — I heard our Poet say —
He'd try to coax some *Moral* from his Play:

Epilogue: The epilogue was very much admired at the time. A few quotations from the newspapers will show how well it was received. "We want words to express the satisfaction the last-mentioned lady [Mrs. Bulkley] gave by her just, elegant manner of speaking one of the most excellent and poetical Epilogues we ever remember to have heard." — *The Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 18, 1775. "The Epilogue, however, made amends; for it struck us as one of the most harmonious, pretty pieces of the kind we have heard for some time." — *The Morning Post*, Jan. 18, 1775. "The Epilogue is so exceedingly refined, elegant, and classical that it equals, if not exceeds, anything of the sort that Roscius [Garrick] himself hath ever produced; it breathes throughout the elegant effusion of refined sentiments, and concludes with the noble ideas of 'lighting the lamp of wisdom with the torch of love.' — Mrs. Bulkley spoke the Epilogue exceedingly well." — Letter in *The Morning Post*, Jan. 20, 1775. "The Epilogue . . . is, perhaps, upon the whole, the best composition of the sort that the Theatre has been honoured with for some years." — *The Gazetteer*, Jan. 21, 1775.

By the author: There was a general belief that Mrs. Sheridan had written the Epilogue. Her sister wrote her: "It's true, indeed; you must not contradict me when I say you wrote the much admired epilogue of *The Rivals*" (Rae's *Life*, i, 285). The statement even found its way into the press: "We hear that the admired Epilogue to the Rivals is the composition of Mrs. Sheridan. There is a delicacy in the thoughts and in the expressions of this poem, that claim the warmest approbation, and leave us in doubt which we shall most applaud, Mrs. Sheridan's excellence in music, or in poetry." — *The Morning Post*, Jan. 28, 1775.

'One moral's plain — cried I — without more fuss;
Man's social happiness all rests on Us —
Thro' all the Drama — whether d—n'd or not —
Love gilds the *Scene*, and *Women* guide the *plot*.
From ev'ry rank — obedience is our due —
D'ye doubt?—The world's great stage shall prove it true.'
The Cit — well skill'd to shun domestic strife —
Will sup abroad; — but first — he'll ask his *wife:*
John Trot, his friend — for once, will do the same,
But then — he'll just *step home to tell my dame.* —
The *surly 'Squire* — at noon resolves to rule,
And half the day — zounds! Madam is a fool!
Convinc'd at night — the vanquish'd Victor says,
Ah! Kate! *you women have such coaxing ways!* —
The *jolly Toper* chides each tardy blade, —
Till reeling Bacchus calls on Love for aid:
Then with each Toast, he sees fair bumpers swim,
And kisses Chloe on the sparkling Brim!
Nay, I have heard that Statesmen — great and wise —
Will *sometimes* counsel with a Lady's eyes;
The servile suitors — watch her various face,
She smiles preferment — or she frowns disgrace,
Curtsies a pension here — there nods a place.
Nor with less awe, in scenes of humbler life,
Is *view'd* the *mistress*, or is *heard* the *wife*.
The poorest Peasant of the poorest soil,
The child of Poverty, and heir to Toil —
Early from radiant Love's impartial light,
Steals one small spark, to cheer his world of night:
Dear spark! — that oft thro' winter's chilling woes,
Is all the warmth his little cottage knows!

9. **Cit**: an abbreviation for "citizen," slightly contemptuous.

The wand'ring *Tar* — who not for *years* has press'd
The widow'd Partner of his *day* of rest —
On the cold deck — far from her arms remov'd —
Still hums the ditty which his Susan lov'd:
And while around the cadence rude is blown,
The Boatswain whistles in a softer tone.
The *Soldier*, fairly proud of wounds and toil,
Pants for the *triumph* of his Nancy's smile;
But ere the battle should he list' her cries,
The Lover trembles — and the Hero dies!
That heart, by war and honour steel'd to fear,
Droops on a sigh, and sickens at a tear!
But Ye more cautious — ye nice judging few,
Who give to Beauty only Beauty's due,
Tho' friends to Love — *Ye* view with deep regret
Our conquests marr'd — our triumphs incomplete,
'Till polish'd Wit more lasting charms disclose,
And Judgment fix the darts which Beauty throws!
— In female breasts did Sense and Merit rule,
The Lover's mind would ask no other school;
Sham'd into sense — the Scholars of our eyes,
Our Beaux from *Gallantry* would soon be wise;
Would gladly light, their homage to improve,
The Lamp of Knowledge at the Torch of Love!

TEXTUAL NOTES

The present text has been made to vary from the reading of the first edition in the following instances :

i. 1. 109 : **of the** for **of they**.
i. 2. 1 : **traversed** for **transferr'd** ; corrected in the third edition.
ii. 1. 11 : **forget** for **forgot** ; corrected in the third edition.
ii. 1. 344 : **Acres** for **Abs.**
iii. 1. 1, 12 : There are no catchwords in the first edition.
iii. 1. 100 : **Abs.** for **Sir Anth.**
iii. 1. 114 : **regimentals** for **regiment** ; corrected in the list of *errata*.
iii. 1. 117 : **Languish** for **Anguish** ; corrected in the list of *errata*.
iii. 3. 15 : **becomes** for **become** ; corrected in the third edition.
iii. 3. 62 : There is no catchword in the first edition.
iii. 3. 82 : **Sure** for **Save** ; corrected in the third edition.
iii. 3. 97 : **doors** for **floors** ; the reading of the third edition.
iii. 4 : The first edition numbers this "Scene V."
iii. 4. 57 : **fall** for **falls** ; corrected in the third edition.
iv. 3 : The first edition numbers this "Scene IV."
v. 1. 1 : There is no catchword in the first edition.
v. 1. 280 : **feeling** for **e eling**.
v. 3. 64 : **clean** for **clear** ; as indicated by line 66, and as corrected by the third edition.
v. 3. 90 : **edge** for **hedge** ; corrected in the third edition.
v. 3. 160 : **any thing** for **any** ; corrected in the third edition.
v. 3. 319 : **Faulkland** for **Jack** ; obviously a misprint.
v. 3. 325 : **unalloy'd** for **unallay'd**.
Epilogue : In the original editions the Epilogue is printed after the Prologue.

The following stage-directions have been added :

Prologue, ll. 2 ; 28.
ii. 2. 91 ; iii. 1. 80 ; iii. 3. 118, 156, 207, 210, 213, 217, 219, 221 ; iii. 4. 138, 141, 147, 150 ; iv. 2. 95, 183 ; v. 3. 275, 334.

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